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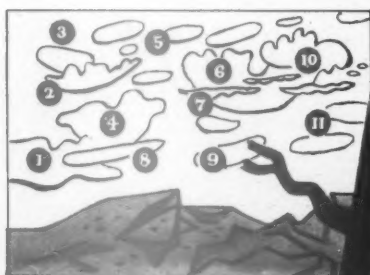
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Nature Watching in SCHWEPPSHIRE



The commoner types are easily distinguishable as (1) The Semi-spatulate, (2) The Hobno-cirrhosus, (3) The Flatto-tyro, (4, 6) Twostraight Nimbuses, (5) The Triple Cumulator, (7) Something else, (8, 9) The Shepherd's Warning, (10) The Long Day Closes, (11) The Fuzzy Blob.

NO. 1 CLOUDS. A false impression has grown up that there is something unnatural about Schweppshire. But the fact is that Nature in Schweppshire is a top must, is actively encouraged in various Groups, in numerous Societies, and at least one registered Union.

For example, ever since the creation of Federated Out-of-doors, no Schweppsmen ever dreams of simply going for walks; indeed most people now rather dislike them. On the other hand even a stroll by fading evening light, when the colours are too faint to find a place on our numbered colour chart for tint spotting, can be made quite gay and perfectly worth-while provided there is an expert to point out, for instance, that clouds are not only vaporized coefficients of ratio-humidity, but are just as much things on a list as everything else, if not more so. We want you to use your eyes for yourselves: our job is simply to tell you what to look at.

Written by Stephen Potter; designed by George Him

SCHWEPPERVESCENCE LASTS THE WHOLE DRINK THROUGH



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The London Charivari

REPORTS of the big French bang in the Sahara fell short of great journalism: they guessed the bomb's explosive power at the equivalent of 100,000 tons of TNT... estimated De Gaulle's complete atomic programme to be likely to cost £2,000,000,000... tricked out their dispatches with pictures of the mushroom cloud, which might have been anybody's. Routine stuff. Yet they mentioned that objects scattered experimentally over the test site included "the superstructures of ships," and left it at that. It seems to me that there's a good story in the business of getting superstructures of ships into



the middle of the Sahara. Or was it all a mistake, and were they just those old Ships of the Desert all the time?

Turn Up the Brightness, Ma

THE *Guardian* reports that the first thought of the people of Fylingdale on being told that a new radar station for tracking ballistic missiles was to be set in their midst was "What about the TV?" The answer seems to be that even television, alas, will have only four minutes to wind up its programmes. Still that's something. It's the way I'd like to go too.

No Sale

I CAN'T help wondering what response there was to last week's announcement by a Shropshire firm, "Salesmen are required for our Automatic Merchandising Equipment..."



Any applicants would stand a pretty good chance of working themselves out of a job.

Off-Shore Islands

THE fine arts committee of the American Legion, if there is such a group, and if there isn't there ought to be, must have suffered quite a nasty turn when the State Department announced the other day that they were going to sponsor "the most important exhibition of Chinese art ever held in America." But the Legionnaires and other militant American patriots, who evidently hope that if their country refuses to recognize China long enough the Communists might just dry up and blow away, need not fear that their Government has altered its policy. All the Chinese art in the exhibition will be lent to the United States by good old reliable Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek; it is Chinese art that has been kept since 1949 in Formosa. Perhaps Peking should follow Washington's example and organize the most important



"Here is the report on that E.T.U. election, Chancellor—I beg your pardon—Prime Minister."

exhibition of American art ever held in China—all borrowed; of course, from Bermuda, to which, surely, some British refugees must have taken examples of Colonial American art after that other revolution.

The Dignity of Labour

IT is undignified, according to Hull dockers, to unload bulk cargo with baskets and shovels. Such feats should be left to coolies or housewives. Perhaps the Guillebaud Committee, when it has its hands free, would grade in order of dignity, and remunerability, such operations as these: carrying a crate on the head, carrying a carcass on the back, accepting a laden net from a grab, savaging a bale with a hook, rolling out a barrel, trailing a sack along the ground, throwing things from hand to hand and dropping things from a height. The test to adopt would be: can you see it as a bronze mural at T.U.C. Headquarters?

Not Fully Mechanized

IT was a good week for electronics. One computer edited a 965-page concordance of Matthew Arnold in less than four days and news leaked out of another device, the apidictor, that gives fifteen days' warning of an impending swarm of bees. But some gaps remain to be plugged. A few insensitive oafs who may not want to consult "The Forsaken Merman" or scoop the bees on their own news might like

fifteen days' notice of the starting price of a Derby favourite, the six thousand Bristol children who must sit their eleven-plus exam again because of a mistake in the papers yearn for a bit of elementary electronic printing, and non-Communist members of the E.T.U. would welcome vote-counting by robots.

Why Pick On Us?

THE Mayor of West Hartlepool is angry because the town is described in John Osborne's *The Entertainer* as "a dead and alive hole." Such insults "make it difficult for us to get staff here." The Mayor is still brooding, perhaps, over a line in Noel Coward's *Red Peppers*—"when last heard from she was falling down drunk at the Empire, Hartlepool." I have long been expecting a protest from Pontefract, which in Graham Greene's *The Complaisant Lover* is recommended by the husband as a suitable place for his wife to spend weekends with her lover. The lover goes so far as to enquire whether the climate is bracing. At mention of Pontefract the audience titters as if somebody had said Wigan. What the other Hartlepoons think about being ignored by Osborne is not yet known.

Down With?

WHEN England's 411 rabbit clearance societies conferred in London recently, some of the more fanatical Clearers showed alarming symptoms of spreading blood-lust. "As they were now running out of rabbits in some

The eleventh in the series of drawings in colour by Hewison, "As They Might Have Been," will appear next week. The subject is: ALFRED KRUPP

places," these trigger-happy hotheads pleaded, couldn't the Government grants be extended to cover the extermination of rats, moles, grey squirrels, "and all other pests"? Just whom, I wonder, have these Jacobins in their sights? It looks to me as if someone will be launching a Rabbit Clearance Society Clearance Society before long. Meanwhile the resourceful rabbit thinks up new ways of defying his persecutors. Up in Arbroath, for example, he has taken to the trees in the cemetery, and this "new technique of living" is baffling the Clearance Society. Bully for bunny!

If You Want to Get Behind

ONE can understand the hatters being both elated and worried by the sudden passion among male adolescents for wearing proper hats. Even twelve-year-old boys are wearing them, in the hope of being mistaken for their elders. Suddenly, after years of frustration among hatters, years of alarm and distaste over the increasing number of Englishmen who go about uncovered, rescue has come from the least likely quarter. And yet, and yet . . . is it only a craze? Will it vanish as suddenly as it came, leaving behind enormous stocks of unsaleable snap brims for twelve-year-olds, and an army of once reliable customers who have given up hats for fear of being mistaken for their juniors?

Still in the Nick

MR. BUTLER has recently announced, rather sadly, that his information about the state of British crime "does at least show . . . that the prison population is at last stationary." And about time, too. The Home Secretary was not, I am assured, referring directly to the current immobility of Mr. Hinds, the least sedentary of Her Majesty's prisoners, but I am surprised that he should describe his information as "not especially cheering." It will certainly be jubilantly welcomed by housewives close to Dartmoor or, indeed, any other centres for escapers' clubs.

— MR. PUNCH





"It'll be just the same as it was with gas in the last war—they'll never use it."

E. S. TURNER

O Blessed Drums of Aldershot!



Old soldiers will soon look in vain for landmarks in the garrison town

IN Aldershot, back in 1941, we spent all too little time decorating boars' heads, building Taj Mahals in sugar and arranging baskets of edible flowers. Nowadays the Army has more time to concentrate on the *haute cuisine*; the other day it sent up to Olympia splendid specimens of the articles I have listed, plus a Brussels Atomium in *pastillage*. These objects were fitly acclaimed by the nation's caterers; indeed, reports say that the Army Catering Corps Training Centre won fifty-two out of eighty-two prizes. Then the exhibits were borne back in triumph to Aldershot, Home of the British Army, which welcomes careful drivers and clever cooks.

I mention this routine exploit in the life of modern Aldershot only so that the taxpayer may judge the quality and resource of the garrison on which some £12,000,000 of his money is now being spent. No one must suppose that the Camp is still a place where helios wink from hill to hill, where Sappers cling to runaway gas-bags and the Cavalry play pushball to the music of ophicleides and serpents up and down the Long Valley.

On the other hand, nobody must expect to find that tactical atomic weapons are being trundled through the streets all day. There is very little to alarm the nervous, other than the eldritch shrieks which are necessary to preserve symmetry, equidistance and silence. In a nuclear day nothing is more soothing than the far crackle of small-arms fire or the *bong, bong, bong* of a ritual drum.

To-day the demolishers are cutting a great swathe across the Camp. Verandas fall from the air. Those external staircases beloved of frugal architects are tumbling in heaps. One moment a doorway inscribed "Ablutions No. 2" is where it has been since, say, 1895; the next it is dust. The reader who wishes to shed a tear over the glum barn whence he marched, in 1939, happy in the knowledge that the State was paying five shillings a week for his first child, three shillings for his second, two shillings for his third and one shilling for each remaining child, must not unduly delay his pilgrimage or he will find the place another temporary car-park. If he wishes a last look at the glasshouse, it is too late already. On the site of the old Waterloo Barracks a new military housing estate is rising. Soon, in place of Waterloo West and Talavera, may be seen centrally heated "patio" homes, "each facing inwards on to its own private walled and paved courtyard, lawn and shrubbery."

The patio life will be very welcome when it comes. It should appeal, for instance, to the present occupants of Pegasus Village, a caravan colony with flagstaff and television mast, where vigorous young men in *tachiste* camouflage return to their brides at close of day. A lance-corporal of twenty came home to find his caravan burned and his wedding presents destroyed; but in the published interview he was philosophical, as if such things were part of the traditional rigours of soldiering.

In every garrison town you will find someone to say that the So-and-So Barracks were originally designed for Jamaica, or Bangalore, or Shanghai, but that owing to the imbecility of the planners they were erected by mistake on home soil. It is a legend as indestructible as that of "something in the tea." With the sweeping demolitions in Aldershot, new legends will have to be found. Will it be said, hereafter, that a streamlined sergeants' mess in Stanhope Lines was originally intended as a Cola-bottling plant at Famagusta?

Aldershot is full of old men who have just spent twenty,



"My notebook's full."

thirty or forty years polishing mess silver. Ask one of them to point out the barracks where young Winston Churchill used to pick himself up from the floor of the riding school and he will point unerringly in the wrong direction. No use asking where Sir Osbert Sitwell learned to snatch up a handkerchief at the gallop, or in which of these gaunt messes he tried, with his bright conversation, to dispel "a silence of bestial chaos, such as may have preceded the coming of the Word."

Some of the denizens of Aldershot are uncertain whether the Queen's Pavilion still exists. I found it, mist-lapped in a green grove, dreaming and withdrawn, the sort of place to inspire a romantic melancholy. Cunningly, it has been made a mess for R.E.M.E. officers, who of all officers are least susceptible to romance or melancholy.

Aldershot has never been in a hurry to borrow the names of modern battles or generals. You have to look hard to find an Alanbrooke Road and I am not certain whether Sir Arthur Bryant would deem it a worthy one. There is probably some good reason why public-houses are not named after modern generals, but the result is that there is duplication among the elder warriors. Within a tankard's toss of the "Sir Colin Campbell" is the "Lord Clyde," which I am willing to swear is Sir Colin ennobled.

Many of the old names are likely to puzzle modern visitors.

Who, for instance, was Hammersley, of Hammersley Barracks? He was a major of Foot who boldly risked his gentlemanly status by becoming the Army's first Superintendent of Gymnastic Exercises, an appointment comparable, in the eyes of his father, to that of "Mr. Angelo, the fencing master." In that heroic age squads went for ten- and twelve-mile runs before breakfast.

Even the humblest buildings pose their questions. Here, for instance, is the home of the Royal Army Dental Corps. Do the apprentices, inspired by the example of the Army Catering Corps, enter whimsical exhibits at national exhibitions at Olympia? And here is the Court-Martial Centre, which looks as if it needed a really sensational trial to put it on the map. Back in 1863, when Colonel Thomas Crawley was court-martialled at Aldershot for alleged severity towards a sergeant, the Government thought nothing of shipping home a hundred and fifty witnesses from India. Why can't we have courts-martial like that nowadays?

Not a stick remains of Rushmoor Arena. Positively, the Siege of Namur will not be staged there again. But not far away a splendid brazen ghost survives in the statue of the Great Duke, on Copenhagen. Man and beast are perdurable; if there is a bottle of stout in the horse's tail we shall not know for hundreds of years yet.

It is easier to demolish a tradition than to start one. A



"You mean I can do anything I like now, pay later?"



recent G.O.C. of Aldershot, having been the instrument of much healthy destruction, has spoken wistfully of reviving the time-gun which used to be fired twice daily from Gun Hill. But anyone who has ever canvassed his fellow residents saying "Why don't we have a time-gun?" will know with what niggling objections such proposals are received. The fact is, it is impossible to start a time-gun. A time-gun may be perpetuated if it already exists, but that is all. In Aldershot one of the practical difficulties is that up near Gun Hill are a hospital and a maternity home. It is in the hospital tower, incidentally, that the once-famous Sebastopol bell is hung. There are those who would like to hear it, too, echo over the town again. A possible solution would be to instal both gun and bell just outside the G.O.C.'s window at District Headquarters.

In the town those curious shops which call themselves military stores have made few concessions to modern taste. In one window I saw an array of tea cosies, elaborately worked in bright regimental colours, like inflated Valentines. I have never attended a function where the tea-cosy proclaimed that it kept the faith; but perhaps I was never invited to Government House on the right afternoon.

One military store was holding a sale. The bargains included a Government three-gallon dixie, a gas-mask baver-sack (2s. 6d.) and a neatly rolled bivouac tent (55s.). The more you think about it, the stranger it all becomes. Are these things bought by quartermasters to make up missing stock? Do dwellers in Pegasus Village buy bivouac tents for their week-end guests? Or are they bought by soldiers who have never slept in tents, are never likely to sleep in tents, but who want to try what it feels like? In another window were a pair of spurs which looked as if they had been there since the Cavalry Brigade said good-bye to its horses. But, though dilapidated, they were not marked down. Sooner or later someone will need a pair of spurs again.

It took me a long time to find a tattooist. At the war's end Aldershot boasted "the only lady tattooist in the country," who worked in friendly rivalry with a male professor. Both were short of good tattooing material, having lavished it over-freely, I suspect, on the Canadian Army. Their successor to-day is installed in an amusement gallery, in a

glass-fronted cabinet no bigger than a good-sized telephone box. Business must be reasonably brisk because a notice on the door says "ONE AT A TIME PLEASE." Another notice says: "EXTRA CHARGE FOR TATTOOING BELOW THE WRIST." A client wishing to have a bird's-eye view of Sydney etched on his diaphragm might yearn for a more private parlour.

Yet another notice outside the tattooist's says: "ANCIENT AS TIME—AS MODERN AS TO-MORROW." I had a quick, chill vision of a hand poised over a button ready to turn half a continent to green glass. It was a swarthy hand with a slogan inscribed (presumably at extra cost) across it: "Death or Glory."

The Entertainer

"Mr. Khrushchev's Visit to India a Flop."—The Guardian

IT is sad when a comic stages
A come-back, and then misgauges
How much the winds that made him famous have veered.
Now the indifferent faces
Watch him go through his paces,
Genial, sly, but sweating
Profusely and never forgetting
How once the whole sub-continent roared and cheered.
Do they miss "the one with the beard"?

Did the bottom fall out of the act
When good old B. was sacked
And sent to work the Stavropol cinema queues?
(The same thing happened when Laurel
And Hardy had had their quarrel.)
Dear Khrush, your talent is huge
But you're badly in need of a stooge,
A man to smile and look worried and lick your shoes;
You have millions from whom to choose.

— PETER DICKINSON



Cem

The Strange Case of Lord Bierbruck

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

BIERBRUCK, HESSE, GERMANY,
Monday

NOTHING much ever happens in the little German town of Bierbruck. The people or Leute go about their daily tasks, as they have done for hundreds of years, with their heads bent low before the piercing, driving Schnee from the north. They are peasants, wearing the peasant costume of this sector of Hesse—fur coats and jack-boots—and all day long they smoke short fat cigars imported from Pomerania, cigars that somehow emphasize the rotund squatness of the typical Bierbrucker.

I travelled to Bierbruck on a queer mission. From the notorious Gasthaus Wilhelm Tell, a name familiar to thousands of British prisoners during the war of '14—'18, I had received an invitation to examine certain documents "of undoubted interest to your paper and its circulation." It was an invitation I could not very well refuse. Pausing only to collect my expenses, the office *Who's Who* and a current copy of the *Daily Express*, I boarded a B.E.A. plane (Flight 1706 A) and allowed my mind to dwell upon the remarkable message.

The hotel is now one of the most luxurious in Western Germany, with running water, poker-work texts and enormous eiderdowns in almost every

room. At least, I pondered, I should be comfortable in Bierbruck.

Herr Schmidt, the proprietor of the Gasthaus, was there at the reception desk to greet me, and after the usual argument about the tariff he conducted me to the Wohnzimmer. At first I saw nothing to account for the excited gleam behind Herr Schmidt's rimless glasses, but soon he pointed to the mahogany table . . . and the glass case.

Carefully he lifted the lid. The book inside—it was hardly more than an exercise book—was open at page fünfzehn and half-way down the list of entries there was an inscription that made me wince and raise my eyebrows:

**März 15. L. Beaverbrook
(Bierbruck)**

"But this is ridiculous . . ." I began.

Roy Nixon



281

"Ach so, mein Herr," said Schmidt, "aber . . ."

"You mean?" I stalled.

"Ich mean nichts," said Schmidt.

"I wish merely to know . . ."

Schmidt's theory was that the first line of the signature was from the pen of a famous English peer, a distinguished newspaper magnate, and that the second line, in the same handwriting, was a German translation.

"Since many years," he said, "have we Bierbrucks in Bierbruck. At the Schloss. Then have we them no more. Warum? Where to find them? Is it possible, I ask, that our Count of Bierbruck has become the English milord Beaverbrook?"

"You're crazy," I ventured. "Lord Beaverbrook was born in Canada and his name was Aitken."

"Ach, so, Kanada. Since two hundred years are the Bierbrucks in Kanada been, and in Bierbruck town have we many Aitkeins. Look, I show!" And he turned the pages rapidly while with a stubby finger he prodded at a dozen or more Atekeins, Atchens, Hatekeins and Otkins. "Old name, yes, in this salient of Germany," said Schmidt.

Of course the whole idea was preposterous. Why, Lord Beaverbrook was one of the devoutest upholders of British breeding and lineage, the bitterest critic of Germanophile historians

and sob-writers. Yet, Mr. Schmidt could point out that the Bierbrucks had often changed their name to Bruckbier or Beverbruck or Brockbere or Bierbuch. There had even been a Graf Beerbruck von Kanada am Spigel. It was puzzling.

After a heavy dinner of pig's knuckle washed down with sauerkraut I retired to my room to write my report. According to *Who's Who* Lord Beaverbrook had held high office under the Crown. He was a member of the flashy Marlborough-Windham club, the father of the Hon. Max Aitken and an Hon. LL.D. of New Brunswick, but significantly, perhaps, he was also the author of a book with the odd title *Resources of the British Empire*. Why had Lord B. bothered to delve so deeply into this subject? And why had he put that word "British" before "Empire"? Wouldn't "Empire" alone have been enough? Would a Bierbruck have said "Empire"? Or "British Empire"? I wasn't sure.

Later, when I joined Herr Schmidt for coffee and brandywein on the terrace, I felt that I ought to reach some decision.

"I doubt," I said, somewhat stiffly, "whether the signature in question is that of Lord Beaverbrook. Why jump to conclusions; why not let sleeping dogs lie? And if you still believe what you do, take my advice and say nothing further about it. There is almost certainly some quite innocent explanation."

I was back in my office in Bouverie Street by noon of the following day.

The Waiting Game

By ALEX ATKINSON

SHOULD be something stirring soon. That's the beauty of it, really—you never know just when the balloon's going to go up, and half the time you're not sure what it'll be when it does. Like the other week. I'd been stood outside a theatre for thirty-five minutes just on the off-chance, and I just bent down for a sec to stop my dog scratching and lo and behold who should come out but that chap what's his name, in the government, you know, high up, something to do with politics. You get him on the telly sometimes, christening ships. And his wife. I could have kicked myself. "Did you see them?" said this woman standing next to me, and I had to say no because she knew very well. Oh, I was mad. Then when I got home the fire had gone out, so it was a wasted evening, really. Still, you have to take the rough with the smooth . . .

There—what was that? Wasn't that somebody at that window up there? I could have sworn I saw a face. Oh, you want to have eyes like a hawk, I'll tell you. Another thing you have to watch

is side entrances. If you're not careful they come sneaking out of a back alley where you never thought there was a door at all, and leave you standing like a fool. Half the time it's done on purpose if you ask me. You're not going to tell me they don't *know* we're waiting? And nothing done about cups of tea, or a bit of music to cheer you up, or nothing. I wouldn't mind if they was to send out servants now and then with messages. "Her Grace is just putting on her corsets," or "His Highness will be out in a jiffy when he's washed his hands," or "They have decided to have an early night after all, and not go on a surprise visit to the pictures." As a matter of fact I do know of one time when someone I won't name came out through the front door as bold as brass with a false nose on and we all thought it was the gas man. Oh, you have to be up to all sorts of dodges . . .

There—isn't that somebody's hand on that curtain? Ask that reporter for a loan of his binoculars. No, too late, they've gone, whoever it was. Of course, the Palace is the worst in my opinion, on account of the railings being put so far from the building. Number Ten's not too bad, because the police will very often tip you off who the people are. That can be a great help when you come to fill in your Spotter's Book. Mine's very near full now. I'm only short of Tommy Steele's dad, a man called Michael Foot, the Queen Mother in evening dress, Princess Anne with two dogs, Nat Lofthouse, Archbishop Makarios and a couple more, and I'll be able to start on the Touching Game. That's where you have to *touch* them, and you have to have a bona fide witness to initial your book each time.

Mind you, it runs in my family, does this. My grandfather came to live in London from up north on purpose, because there was no one much to watch up there except Mr. Gladstone. Oh, we've watched and waited for pretty nearly everybody in our time. I've got a snap at home of my aunt waiting for





"I'm from next door. I wonder if you've got a pair of opera glasses I could borrow?"

the Aga Khan to come out of the refreshment room at Kempton Park, but it was only a rumour. She found out afterwards he was in Monte Carlo all the time. We have to rely a lot on rumours. I remember in my young days my boss was ever so understanding. "Can I have two hours off this afternoon?" I used to say. "There's a rumour that Owen Nares is going to buy a cravat in Regent Street." Then we also have to read between the lines in all the papers. It doesn't half keep you on the go. Look at to-morrow. I've got two weddings in the morning—*two*, mind you: that's going to mean another taxi. Clarence House after lunch. The Foreign Office. A pub in the Euston Road for some strike leaders. London Airport in case Lady Dorothy's

with him—I haven't got her yet. Back to the Savoy for an American—I can't read my own writing. Then a film première—they're very good, if you know the knack of squeezing into the foyer and getting behind a pillar. Then on to this new night-club in case of any boxers or top models. I'll be lucky if I get to bed before two in the morning.

I'll tell you a funny thing about us, too. If anyone asks us why we're waiting, we always say we just happened to be passing. We never crack on, you see, because it's more of a secret society—but if you keep your eyes open you'll see the same old faces cropping up time after time. Then another thing, we never carry umbrellas or macs, because it's much more of a feather in your cap if you can manage to get

absolutely drenched to the skin waiting for someone—especially if they don't turn up. Anyone can wait on a sunny day, but we don't reckon ourselves fully fledged until we've had a real good soaking. Yes, you can hold a newspaper over your head if it's hailstones, but not otherwise . . .

Well, if they don't make a move here soon I'm going to be late for Sir Winston. I'm getting too old to stand about just on spec. Past it, that's what I'm getting, and I blame the royal birth as much as anything. Oh, that's worn me right down to a shadow, that has, I don't mind telling you—and there's not much chance of *my* name going in the history books, is there? . . .

Wait! Look! There's somebody coming out now! . . .

Fings Get Double Dodgy

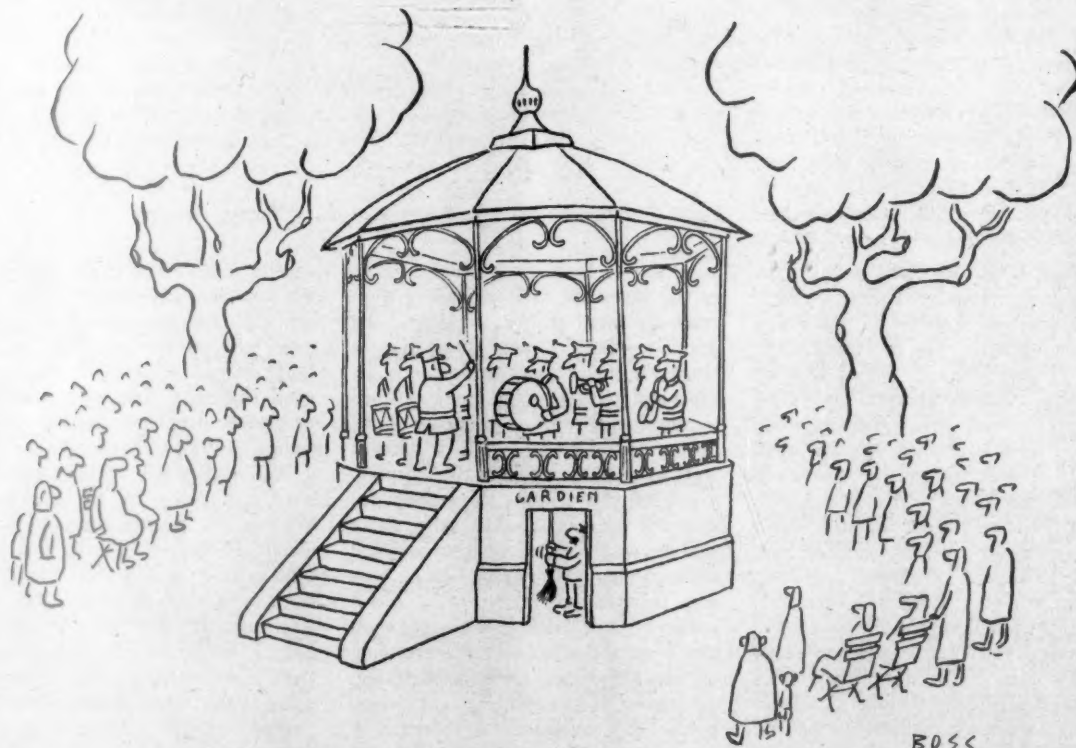
By DAVID MORTON

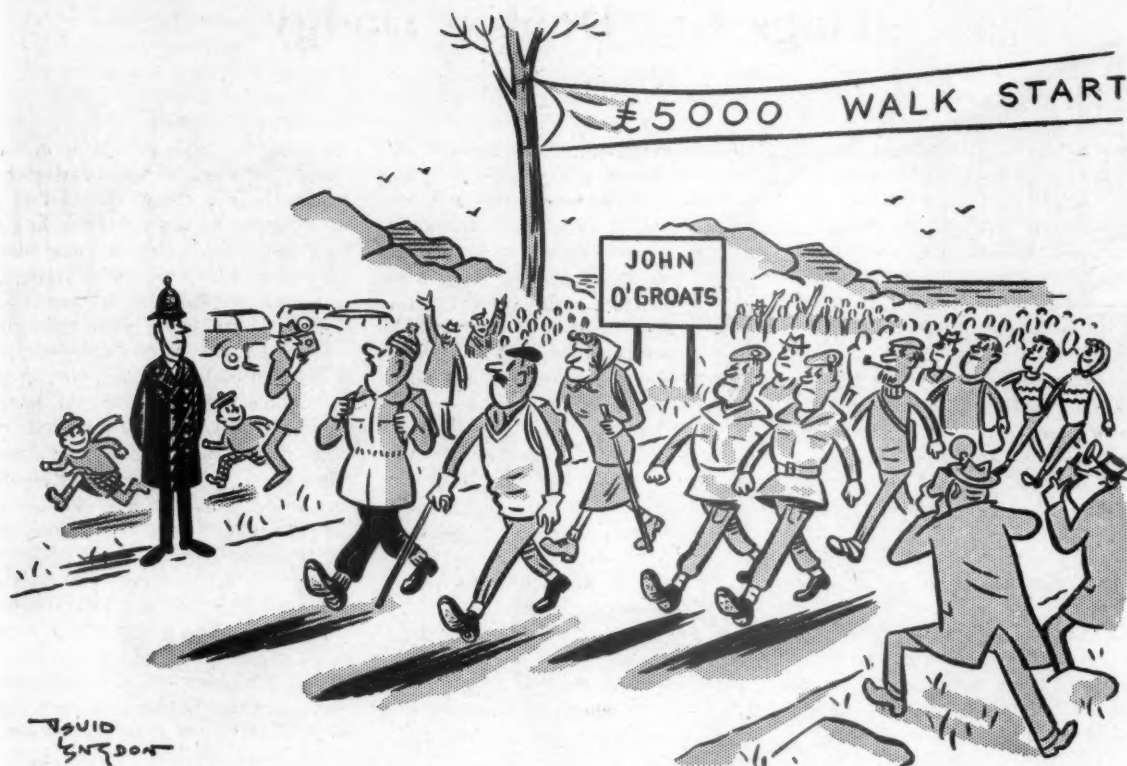
STAND on me, ever since I got done bang to rights, fings ain't been wot they used to be. It's getting double dodgy for a geezer like me to live in the manor to which I have become accustomed. If you have clocked the posh Sundays you will see that all us slag are in dead bother; just walk up West and you'll soon see what I am rabbiting on about. Look, I'll mark your card for you—slide into any film or play and the odds are it is all about Soho and all them that do their laying about there. I'll tell you the strength of it—I never sussed that so many otherwise nice geezers would take such diabolical liberties with trade secrets. There's that Wolf Mankerwicks blowing the gaff about the Portobello and all points east, and the east getting right back at him with a fing about Soho—that came on after Mr. Wildeblood's Crooked Mile, and that's a title that gives me the dead needle. Then

there's the lily-white mob laying about in Sloane Square and giving the Chelsea set ideas. To add to our miseries all the foreign johns are sticking their hooters in. You can see a very dodgy line in Porto Rican tearaways, and there's an old Irish geezer raving on about the Micks' private war; and some double flash documentaries about foreign brasses—Irma la douche and Suzie Wong from Hong flipping Kong.

And the books . . . well, when the law went and copped a deaf'un to Mr. Weidenfeld and Mr. Nicolson for publishing that fing about a teenage mystery in need of care and protection, I sussed that all the dodgy bookshops would soon be skint. And Sir John's best seller was doing very nicely . . . well, you just can't compete with these flash bookshops and the Stationary Office. Turn on the telly and the odds are you'll see some geezer who's been stuck on probation.

Well in the death we was all in dead shtook. The manor was buzzing with swedes up from the sticks and after all these flipping writers had blown the gaff, they just didn't want to know about being conned. Any rube from the country would laugh fit to croak if you fed him the old moody about a nice club with lovely golden-hearted birds just dying to drink cold tea with him. It has got double difficult to earn an honest penny in Soho. Stand on me, only the other day I am sitting in Fred's nosh bar when I see this geezer clocking me, and he has a right pair of winkle-pickers on and I don't mind saying I would not like to be around if he started putting the leather in. Anyway he is clocking me over his salt beef and I got the dead needle and steamed over to him to ask him the odds. Ho well he says I am a well-known photographer and would very much like to take your picture for *Vogue*. Well that narked me because





"Are we all right for Land's End?"

everyone knows *Vogue* is a glossy book about birds' clobber and I think it is all dead suss, but this geezer says no, I am thort double smart up West and all the over-privileged birds would like nothing better than to clock my mug in *Vogue*.

So in the death we have it away to a rubbish tip in East Acton and this geezer is crawling around shining silver paper in my boat and taking pictures from all angles. Well my bird works in a hairdressers and she clocks this picture and nicks *Vogue*, and I am washed up with her after that. And all the slag in the manor are laughing fit to bust. So I had it away smartly on my toes out of Soho. And now I am in Tangier which is a sort of villains paradise. I consider I am on to a very fair thing if I don't make a ricket; I own a dead flash motorboat and run a dodgy little service from here to there with a little water-skiing thrown in. But if I catch that geezer Mankerwicks sticking his hooter in I'll put the frighteners on him for good.

No Curtains for Brent

By R. G. G. PRICE

"WHERE are we going to set our new thriller? Warsaw again?"

"I'm sick of the Iron Curtain. In the old days there were all sorts of frontiers in Europe to get your hero across. Now Brent always seems to cross the same one. What about smuggling across the frontier between the 'Six' and the 'Seven'?"

"Too many possible changes between writing and publication."

"Are there no Scandinavian frontiers?"

"That means crook-stuff and after all we've made our name by making politics exciting."

"Norway and Sweden used to be one

country. Is there no movement that is prepared to bomb them into remarriage?"

"It is a land frontier. Include Denmark and we could have some stowaway stuff."

"We generally try to cash in on our holiday. That would mean a holiday up north and we should have to wait for the sun and put our schedule back. Now the Costa Brava . . ."

"Everybody goes to the Costa Brava and that must mean everybody writes thrillers about it. I sometimes wonder whether we oughtn't to begin reading thrillers."

"Too much danger of unconscious plagiarism and anyway it would cut



"This place is rapidly becoming a dormitory."

down our time for quotation hunting. They're one of our selling points. Remember how well we did out of that Complete Wycherley I took when we went to Greece?"

"The Iron Curtain is East-West. Is there anything North-South?"

"Protestant and Catholic? What effect do you think an escape by a persecuted Catholic would have on our Protestant readership? Be practical."

"I can never follow Belgian politics. I suspect the papers only put them in when the Big Powers are quiescent, and never bother to explain the bits they have left out. Is there a Walloon Independence Movement?"

"Sure to be. People who speak small languages are always intransigent. The trouble with a flight across Belgium is the distances are so small. Brent must be more than slightly out of breath when he reaches safety. Andorra?"

"States as small as that have been overdone. They are generally bases for some enormous plot against Europe as a whole. Scottish Nationalists?"

"Leave them to Linklater. And don't bring up the Ulster border, either."

"Need it be politics again? What about vast commercial empires, of course with an undertone of suggestion that there ought not to be vast commercial empires?"

"I can see the opening. 'Brent's throat went dry as he realized that in another three hundred revolutions of the train's wheels he would be out of his own sales territory into the Consolidated's. He slipped off the safety catch and turned up his coat collar.' I think not."

"Are there any relations between Finland and Israel? That would be a good, long, varied journey."

"If we say there are, how many

reviewers would know better? Provided there are enough odd-sounding proper names and fake newspaper reports and knowing witticisms, we're home."

"To give us a good start, could you provide a knowing witticism?"

"Einbold, Enji and Ben Souza went to heaven. At the gate each was asked whether the End of the World had been reached. Einbold said 'Yes, when Helsinki voted for the Blue Plan,' Enji said 'You tell me' and Ben Souza said 'I don't see the relevance of that question. Our pig-iron production curve is vertical.'"

"I can see this would create a feeling in the reader's mind that the author was his superior, but not how you propose to explain the witticism if it should be necessary to the plot to do so."

"The scene of cutting, knowledgeable gossip in the café is brutally interrupted by a bomb."

"Is the flight and pursuit from Finland to Israel or vice-versa?"

"Always make it from cold to warm. That leaves the reader feeling full of euphoria and ready to recommend the book."

"Finland and Israel are hardly likely to be at war, surely?"

"They are the only two countries in the world that have the know-how for the latest secret weapon—half each."

"Secret weapons are *vieux jeu*, now they have public weapons that can wipe out the human race, and who cares if anyone has a weapon that can wipe out the solar system?"

"What about a secret defence, something that will make all the heavy elements non-fissile?"

"Power sabotage! You could have the Atomic Interests and the Military Interests and the Pacifist Interests all after it, while Brent tries to get through and unite the two halves of the know-how."

"But what side is he on? If he is backing the Oil Interests it would never do."

"That's a detail. If necessary we can reverse the hero and the villain as we had to when we were plotting *Last Train To Khaskovo*."

"Surely Russia comes into it somewhere. It would be neither fashionable nor credible if it didn't."

"I've got it. It's the Chinese who try to hijack the plans. The Russians can be rather disapprovingly on the Chinese side but not very actively."

"Heroine?"

"A Chinese-speaking physical chemist with one Finnish grandfather and one Israeli. The tensest moment is when she is trapped in an Austrian restaurant in Basle trying to hide the fact that she knows English."

"Why Basle? It's miles off course."

"Because we must have a chapter about the timetable of international expresses and Basle has had a thin time since the old William le Queux days were followed by all this Iron Curtain crossing."

"Agreed!"

No Waiting

INSTANT coffee, instant tea,
Instant drinks in paper mugs,
Instant anodynes on TV,
Instant dreams from instant drugs;
Instant bravery in pills,
Instant philosophies for fools,
Instant cures for psychic ills,
Instant wealth from football pools;
Instant soups and instant cakes,
Instant ways to strum guitars,
Sets for painting instant fakes,
Instant ways to reach the stars—
Man's means of instant suicide,
Miraculously, stays untried.

— ANTHONY BRODE



Man in Apron

by

Lamy.



THE MARCHER

The Journal of Pedestrian Protest

- Vol. 1. No. 7

Declining Standards?

DISILLUSION is rife among experienced Protest Marchers, and only a bigoted optimist can ignore it. The episode at Hyde Park Corner, devastatingly analysed by Bernard Liver in the next column, did at least serve to bring these discontents to the surface.

What is the matter? Never, apparently, has the Protest March been so healthy. Almost every street in London has its column of indignant but orderly citizens carrying their stirring placards; March House is busy from morn to night with requests for routes, etc.; TV takes our causes into every home.

In fact the very popularity of marching is partly to blame. The need to compete with other marches for public attention has betrayed organizers into unbecoming sensationalism; too often recently have Marchers of long standing been jostled into subsidiary positions so that a pretty girl may be nearer the cameras, and there has been a distasteful plethora of prams.

There has also been a disturbing rise of marching for marching's sake. At the March of the League for Compulsory Chess a group of young socialites, armed with blank placards and charcoal, was abroad asking genuine Marchers what to write and "What it was all in aid of."

Finally, there is the uncertainty of world affairs. Often enough a Cause may be perfectly valid but there is no suitable person to whom to deliver the Protest.

What is to be done? Marchers themselves must learn to eschew sensationalism, and to question the credentials of those who appear to be Marching for no more than the companionship of a Sunday afternoon in the rain.

But that is not enough: the authorities must act. They must immediately take steps to clarify World Affairs. In the meantime the appointment of an Official Receiver of Protests would be an acceptable palliative.

HYDE PARK CORNER: Bernard Liver

IN case there remain any fortunate people in this country who have not heard enough about the miserable affair at Hyde Park Corner to bring them out in hepatitis at the mere thought of constituted authority for the rest of their lives, let me, at the risk of provoking a bout of nausea in my patient readers, briefly go over the facts. And when I say the facts, I am not referring to the whimsical generalities of Chief Inspector Crackenthorpe, nor the inarticulate yelps

of Mr. Pinemarten, nor even the elegant ambiguities of the Home Secretary; by facts I mean here, in my quaint old-fashioned way, the actual events of the evening of Sunday, February 14, between 4.5 p.m. and 5.35 p.m.

The facts, then, are these. At half-past three on that unhappy day a tidily-organized column of marchers arranged by the Committee Against Interfering with the Moon (Kensington Chapel) formed up in Brompton Road with the object of marching to Westminster and protesting against the Government's inexplicable decision to have the tide-tables in the Nautical Almanac rewritten in British Summer Time throughout. The march was duly

registered at March House, and a route-card and time-table lodged with the police. When the head of the column reached Hyde Park Corner at four o'clock, via Knightsbridge, the number of marchers was estimated at one hundred and fifty, and there were two hand-lettered banners bearing the legends "HANDS OFF THE MOON," and "GOD'S TIME NOT MAN'S TIME."

Meanwhile a rather less orderly but not less legal column of London



The height of the fracas at 5.20 p.m.

Somalis had formed at Victoria Station, whose intention was to march to the Ethiopian Imperial Embassy, as it is cutely called, and hand in a protest against the infringement of grazing rights by Tigre tribesmen on the Somali-Ethiopian border. Because the

number of London Somalis is small, this party was reinforced by a contingent from the League for the Augmentation of Dissatisfied Minorities, which brought the total numbers up to approximately ninety-five, excluding the inevitable escort of heavily-mounted police. Banners were carried, but they were written in Amharic. This march, too, was notified to all concerned.

The head of this column also reached Hyde Park Corner (via Grosvenor Place) at four o'clock. While it is impossible definitely to impute *mens rea* to the police, it has to be pointed out

that they were well aware that this conflict would arise, and as they should know better than anyone, a man is responsible for the natural consequences of his acts.

The traffic-lights (and there is no dispute about this) were showing green for the Moon Marchers and red for the Somalis, and it might be said that this gave the right of way to the Knights-bridge party. This, however, is to ignore a basic principle of British behaviour. Where British nationals and nationals of other countries are in conflict it is assumed among decent

people that the foreigners will have priority. The Somalis, acting on this assumption, marched across the red light on their way into Hyde Park.

The C.A.I.M. column, instead of waiting for them to pass, chose to ignore the usual courtesies and to go straight ahead towards Piccadilly. Various reasons have been given to account for this behaviour, most of them pretty wide of the mark. (I give warning that I shall examine them in detail later.) At all events, the two columns met in unhappy and irrelevant conflict at the
(continued on page 45)

Letters to the Editor

SIR,—It would be tragic if our splendid movement brought a recrudescence of the bleating, thumping brass band, long associated with war and violence, but I report with regret that for its first five miles, last Sunday, the League Against Excessive Packaging March suffered from exactly this jingoistic old nuisance. (May I take this opportunity of reminding readers that a League Against Brass Bands March is arranged for Sunday, March 13th, assembly at Kneller Hall, Twickenham, 3 p.m.) Yours, etc., M. J. Q. PARSON, Rhyl.

SIR,—Is it possible to fall in love while marching? My friend and I both met very nice boys going through Chadwell Heath the other evening [Shoppers' Why-do-they-close-at-lunchtime March, Chadwell Heath Cemetery to West Ham Chamber of

Commerce. *Ed.*] but fear it may have been just the romance of the occasion. Yours truly, EDNA WREAKER, Romford.

SIR,—Contrary to what your correspondent, Dr. E.S., stated last week, there is no danger of internal organs being displaced by continuous marching, though such marching may in certain cases further displace organs displaced already. No harm in a check-up, anyway! Dr. B. W., Stepney.

Last Week's Marches

League for Compulsory Chess (*Bedford Square to Ministry of Education*). An elegant and dignified occasion was to some extent marred by the attendance of a group of young persons, perhaps from Chelsea but certainly uninterested in the Cause, who became rowdy while the leaders were handing to an Under-Secretary of the Ministry their interesting proposal for the revision of the Curriculum in Comprehensive Schools.

League of Landscape Lovers (*Primrose Hill to Westminster*). A gay and enchanting protest against the continued industrialization of rural England. Marchers were dressed as thatchers, hedgers, morris-dancers, stable-boys, sextons, etc.; unfortunately the March arrived after Parliament had adjourned owing to a last-minute decision to go the prettiest way rather than the shortest.

Society of British Pedestrians (*Holland Park to Ministry of Transport*). A classic little march, organized as a protest against the proposal to make pedestrians wear rear lights. The organizers claim that it averaged 4.8 m.p.h. for the distance.

A MARCHING Holiday this year? Wide selection scheduled prtst. mrchs., town or country, long or short, all subjects. Write for full details of assembly points, language spoken, etc. Reduced rates for banner-carriers. Box 150.

HAVE YOU read "They Threw Me in Cement"? All you need to know about the marcher's rights and duties. Foreword by Dr. Soper, 4s. 9d., all Left bookshops.

ALDERMASTON or Trafalgar Square, you can't beat Williamson's "Sole-of-Discretion" ex-W.D. boots. MERRYDEW's Marcher's Pocket Ambulance, all you need to treat baton-bruises, frostbite, horse-kicks, etc. "Takes care of everything but malnutrition." H.W.J., Blantyre. (From any N.H.S. practitioner.)

BEST BANNERS OF 1959

1st Prize



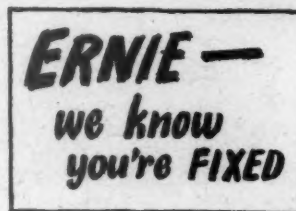
Carried on Sunday, Oct. 4th, by the Misses Wendy and Caroline Purgishly, Rhondda Valley Young Conservatives.

Special Award for Design



Massed Managements March, Savoy Hotel to Transport House, Sunday, July 3rd.

Special Award for Content



League of Premium Bondholders, Brixton Town Hall to Downing Street, Sunday, April 5th.

HANDY HINT: No. 3



Next Week: How to make a cloth cap baton-proof.

Thoughts on the Cow Belt

By PERRY MADOC

TO readers interested in the topic I pass the information that the Cow Belt (London, Railway), which is retreating rapidly and if the present rate is maintained should reach beyond Oxford by 1965, is on one section of the Western Region precariously held—if that is the right word—by a few disconsolate, hemmed-in looking cows near Hayes, Middlesex. Cows, with their changeless habits and their enormous capacity for immobility and rumination, are ill-adapted to the current fidgetiness and are among the first to get pushed out in the grab for land.

Pondering on this sad truth my thoughts became distracted by the back of a diesel engine driver's neck. This presented yet another disagreeable aspect of the switch to oil. Hitherto, in their official guise, the backs of engine drivers' necks—except for fleeting inter-journey glimpses of grimy and rather creased-looking skin-spaces above dungarees honourably soiled in pursuance of their wearers' noble calling—have been sacrosanct. As have, indeed, the engine drivers themselves—aloof, god-

like creatures in close and awe-inspiring communion with the magnificent monsters they serve.

There is nothing either awe-inspiring or magnificent about a diesel train, and in the type of car I have in mind the driver is blatantly exposed, his neck rather cissily clad in a clean collar, his hair brushed, his hands unsullied and if not obviously manicured certainly bereft of all contact with oily rags, cotton waste, etc. Moreover, the driver can, and not uncommonly does, wink at the passengers, exchange backchat with passers-by on the platform, hail the ticket collector familiarly, and has a small sandwich-tin containing his lunch on a little shelf, which also holds—the shelf, I mean, not the tin—the *Daily Mirror*, *Rustlers of Bar H* and ten Woodbines.

This sort of propinquity is a shattering come-down, in no way offset by the fact that passengers can now not only see the tunnels coming, but can see the round white bit at the end when the tunnel is nearly over.

While on the subject of railway employees: these, in general, have always

tended to be middle-aged and reflective, but nowadays appear to be drawn more and more from what I can only describe (with distaste—after all, how can anyone be 'teen an age?) as the teenage group, engine drivers in particular bearing a youthful insouciance, and their firemen seeming scarcely to have passed the eleven-plus stage. I have also noticed a preponderance of flighty guards with roving blue eyes, and one can almost see the unformed bones of dining-car attendants bend beneath the weight of soup. Ticket inspectors, with a timeless, clinical calm acquired through years of waiting while people look in all the wrong pockets and become puce with panic, are almost the only exception.

I should like here to mention another class of railway dependants, namely, railway cats. These are invisible, but we know they exist because special arrangements have to be made for them to be fed by signalmen's wives during stay-out strikes. I know of a railway cat who used to travel regularly along a branch line, occasionally changing at the Junction and taking a few days off at a main line station, where he was treated with great deference. On his return he always knew where to alight without having to crane his neck distractedly out of the window. As he invariably travelled free and his movements were covered by frequent telephone calls among the staff, this is plain proof that there is no hesitation to abuse the privileges extended to its heedless employees by a shaky railway economy, thus shamelessly exploiting the taxpayer.

Actually, railway cats may sometimes be seen on the rare occasions when one gets one's feet wet and is allowed to dry them in the ticket-office.

Which leads me to discuss fires in ticket-offices, places marked Private, and rooms set aside for porters. These are always very hot and red—I refer of course to the fires, though sometimes the porters are too—in marked contrast to the dead or dying clinkers to be found in waiting-rooms. Ticket-office fires often have sausages frying over them



"Siddown."

and there is always a kettle boiling for tea. One realizes that in the event of the fire going out the youngest clerk has only to nip out smartly with a shovel when the next train comes in, and I am not carping at the comforts enjoyed by these meritorious workers, but merely at the fact that passengers do not share in the bounty of coal, live or otherwise, which abounds so plentifully in and about railway stations. (But a doomed bounty, alas! and perhaps we can anticipate rather dreary oil burners in ticket-offices.)

Finally, a word about the troglodytes who dwell exclusively in the Severn Tunnel and rattle tin cans, old saucepans and discarded zinc baths when trains pass through, but are otherwise harmless. There is no evidence to support the theory that these are remnants of the Old Stone Age (which was, after all, allergic to metal) emerging occasionally to barter at the Junction, and my own conjecture is that the Tunnel is the haunt of elementals whose habitation was disturbed during its construction. I have no satisfactory explanation to offer, however, for those neat, perennially deserted little huts with chimneys dotted about near goods yards and embankments, nor as to why the onions, potatoes, cabbages, runner beans, chrysanthemums and gladioli on stations and railway allotments are always larger and more advanced than those elsewhere, despite the fact that no one is ever seen tending or cultivating them.

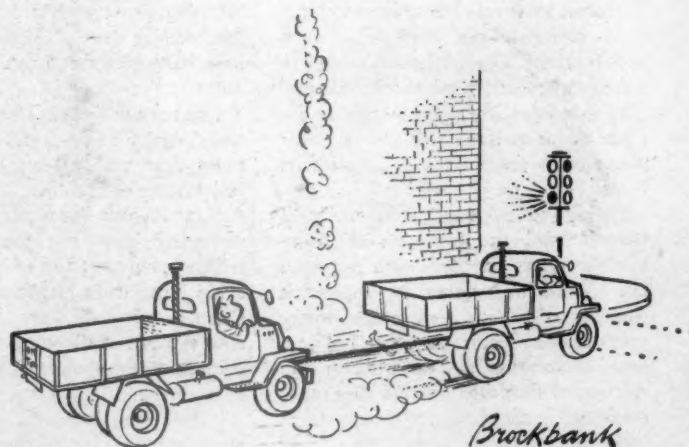
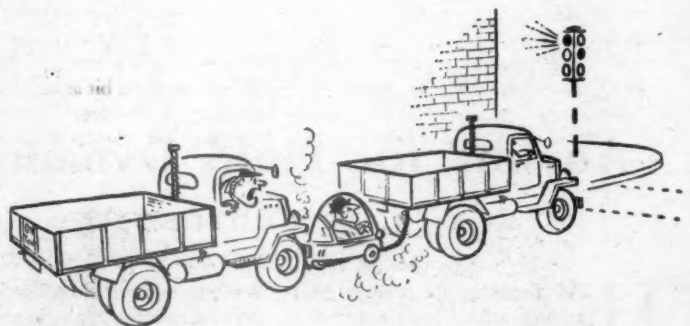
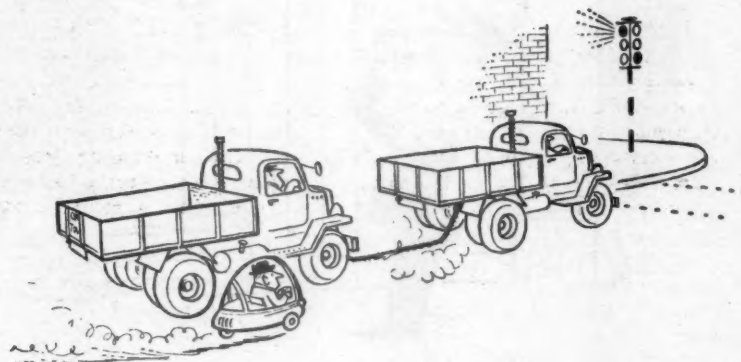
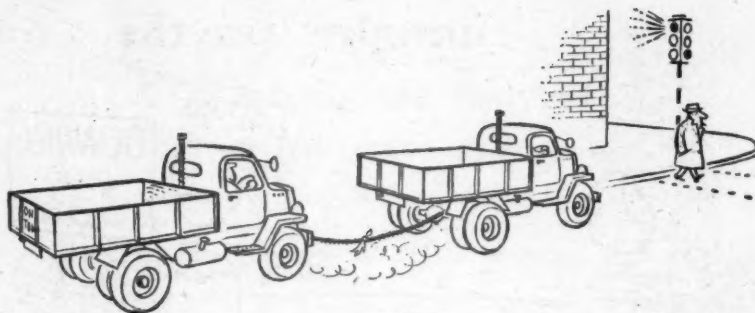
One could discourse almost indefinitely upon railway topics; female announcers, for instance, always being Cheese or Plum, and those bells ringing which nobody takes any notice of, and the information imparted in places marked Information being so wildly fanciful. But one has to stop somewhere, so I will close with a useful warning, i.e. passengers wishing to face the engine going through Shrewsbury must *start off backwards*.

☆

"As a companion to that highly successful and best-selling book *Be Your Own House Plant Expert*, Dr. D. H. Hessayon of Pan Britannica Industries, Ltd., Waltham Abbey, Essex, has now written a second volume entitled *Be Your Own House Plant Expert*."

Popular Gardening

He's no fool.



Brockbank



"Hey! Mr. Baskerville!"

Anyone for Fluid Dynamics?

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

HOW fierce is the competition among school-leavers for the sort of jobs going nowadays? Is there a rush on electronic switching, radar data-handling, high-nickel alloy hot-working? Or, at the other end of the thermometer, what about coolants? Jobs in coolants are going all over the place as far as I can see; and the same seems to be true of square-loop ferrite cores.

Owing to a prior engagement I haven't read the Countess of Albe-marle's report on the Youth Services, but I'd like to bet that any analysis it contains of what's eating the young overlooks one factor: they're short on a sense of vocation, and tend not to care one way or the other whether they make a career "in the sphere of matrix stores with microsecond access time" or

researching into "the effects of transients on heat transfer to single and two phase fluids." (I quote from practically any morning paper with a page or two of ads. offering work of this kind, and can't help being glad that I'm not looking for any.)

I'm not purely sentimental. I realize that Youth's sweet-scented manuscript must close with a bang on dreams of lion-taming or becoming a fully paid-up A.S.L.E.F. man, but surely even to-day's youngster goes out into the world trailing a shred or two of romance. It's a big jump from Henty and Fenimore Cooper—all right, say Robin Hood and William Tell—to airborne digital computing equipment and micro-wave engineering.

"Well, son, have you decided what you want to do for a living?"

"Yes, Dad. High density magnetic recording."

"I see. Is that what your friend Gerald's gone in for?"

"Oh, Dad, you don't know nothing! Gerald's got a Higher National Certificate in Applied Chemistry; he's in propellants and pressurization. But between you and me I don't think he'll ever get a rocket off the ground."

"Why not?"

"Well, Marlene says he doesn't know X-ray diffraction from infra-red spectroscopy."

"Who's Marlene?"

"Gerald's girl. She's an instrumentation technician."

I cite the above exchanges as imaginary, and could be wrong at that. But my feeling is that boy-into-breadwinner presupposes a certain excitement, if only from a sense of graduation into the sort of world Dad's been talking about as long as you can remember, a world in which drinks with old Fred, a bit of a dust-up with Mr. Parsons, tearful outbursts from aggrieved secretaries or three-day conferences at Hastings have suggested a flesh-and-blood context for the daily round. It may well be that even instrumentation technicians leave to get married, and that lists of contributions to farewell gifts have been known to circulate in the programming departments of analogue-digital data conversion equipment laboratories, but a mere chilly tolerance must hang over such occasions: love, I seem to hear the Senior Development Engineer saying as he gulps his ceremonial sherry, has not yet been eliminated by science, more's the pity, and will someone kindly sweep up the cake crumbs so that the production of silicon and germanium transistors and rectifiers can make up for lost time.

I am in no position, unfortunately, to put forward alternative suggestions for earning a living. There's nothing much else going nowadays. A glance at the situations wanted reveals a few voices crying in the wilderness. Here is a man advertising for "an interesting post entailing residence in Scandinavia"; another offers to captain a yacht; a third "would undertake research in museums." I wish them the best of luck. But actual advertisements by prospective employers seeking yacht captains, museum researchers or men

anxious to sweat it out in Sweden simply don't meet the eye at all. What the personnel manager is looking for, as the school-leavers surge through the interview room, is a budding synchro inspector, systems analyst, flight simulator device draughtsman or jig and tool designer. True, I see a couple of non-scientific openings. One even seeks an author . . . but wants him to write "technical descriptions of new engineering projects" and to have experience "in preparing overhaul manuals on electronic equipment"; the other wants a solicitor, who doesn't mind (presumably) abandoning dreams of the Bar and joining the fully pensionable staff of a firm making computers and tabulators. It must all be very difficult for the careers master, particularly if he has been instrumental in bringing the school-leaver of the moment into the Sixth Form essay-prize class (Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke, With a Memoir) . . . "Well, Foster, I'm afraid I've nothing on offer at the moment in the way of a job for a staff poet. Are you sure you couldn't try your hand at gear layout, or analogue techniques? Six hundred a year going here for a young man interested in R.F. work up to two hundred megacycles. No?"

No.

Well, I feel with the lad. I feel that there is some excuse if, starting out in the world, he doesn't get much beyond the corner of the street. That's why you see so many lads gathered there nowadays in my opinion. They've been talked into going for an interview as an assistant ductwork designer, and on the way there the enthusiasm has waned, the impetus run out of the heels of their boots. It would out of mine. In fact if I found a bunch of them plotting instead to break and enter an automatic instrumentation assembly shop, tearing the legs off the chairs and pouring ink and gum into a few linear and non-linear control systems I don't say I should actually join them; but it would call for a determined rallying of my civic instincts before I actually shambled off to dial 999.

☆

Vin Extraordinaire

"There was a bottle of Georgian wine standing on the sideboard, which looked as if it might have been made in Britain in the '20's for a hire-purchase company."

Daily Mail

Hancock and Ladders

RICHARD FINDLATER Visits the Toy Fair

ONLY one thing seemed to be missing from the Seventh British Toy Fair in Brighton last week, a child. Of any sort. Taking the Fair by and large, which was quite a long way as it spread over three hotels and the Corn Exchange, the young in heart were not there. And although the representatives (*not* salesmen, please) showed a proper zeal for their goods (on view to the trade only), I noticed a certain lack of enthusiasm for the eventual customers—what some of the toymen like to call, with bared teeth, The Kiddiwinks. "Not brought up properly to-day, they aren't," said one man, who seemed to be concerned

in the manufacture of guided missiles. "Get too much, they do," he complained, handling one of his weapons with what looked to me like a Herodish gleam in his eye.

At Brighton, it is true, there was everything that the most determinedly contemporary, dementedly doting and treacherously inflationary parent could possibly lavish on his brood. What really Modern Dad could resist the lure of the Jetnik, "a two-stage rocket-launched orbital satellite"; or the carefree larks of the Corporal ("an entirely new explosive warhead is available . . . Fit one to your Corporal now and get even more fun," pleads a



"I can tell you one thing for sure, you're going to have a shocking cold."



"Polly said 'Good morning,' dear."

handout); or the apotheosis of the do-it-yourself craze expressed in a curiosity called *The Visible Man*? This box proudly claims that it includes All Vital Organs of the Human Body, and your lucky child can—if his mind happens to be twisted that way—spend happy hours assembling the said organs and replacing them from Skin to Skeleton.

Some toy tycoons are clearly doing their bit for Science. One suave rationalist detained me en route to point out, somewhat debatably, that "there must be a scientific reason for everything that happens in the world" and that a 1960-minded boy could start learning the reasons now "at the elementary end." for less than a pound, actually. Under the pressure of the *nouvelle vague*, even the old trustees of the toy world have to make concessions. Teddies are not exempt. "This year expressions are kinder," I learned last week, "bodies are softer and squeakers are worn in the tummy and not in the back." One tastemaker even flourishes a *tail*. As for the dolls, some of those slavishly follow the adult fashions, with silvered beehive hair-dos and black drainpipes, and—of course—there's a TV set in every chic doll's house.

Bemusedly wandering through arsenals of warplanes and colonies of bears, past the products of inimitably titled firms such as Faerie Glen Wear or Merrythought, Ltd. I made some odd incidental discoveries. A specialist in paper hats confirmed the abiding strength of Welsh nationalism: "If you bring out one of those steeple hats, it goes like hot cakes," he told me. "But if you try selling glengarries and bal-morals, nobody takes a blind bit of notice in Scotland." Elsewhere I found

surprising proof of the endurance of an old Scottish institution—that eighteenth century actors' favourite, *Douglas*. It included one line that everybody remembers, the one about "My name is Norval, on the Grampian Hills," and someone in a toy firm had evidently remembered it in the fit of creation. For there, modestly exposed to view in Brighton, was Norval, the Bashful Blinket—an animal not yet televised, I believe, by Attenborough or the Denises.

I marvelled, too, at the geography of it all, as mapped in the Fair catalogue: the Red Indians conceived in a Monmouthshire village; the Kentish rectory where men breed pandas ("with felt eyes securely sewn in"); the Arcadian beasts from the Burlington Arcade; and the Empire Hall in Egremont whence come, and I quote, "the internationally known range of 'Just Like Mummy's Kiddibags,'" But where in all this, I wondered, was the clue to the modern child—as distinct from his parents?

I stumbled on the heart of the matter at last, I think. Somewhere in the depths of the Grand Hotel I came face to face with Hancock's Half Hour—not on a TV screen but on a cardboard box adorned with glooming images of Mr. H. Inside is a map of his demesne, and if you start out from the old home in Railway Cuttings you can—in a way that will puzzle no "oldie" accustomed to Snakes and Ladders—take your watch out of pawn, visit a theatrical agent, get swindled by Sidney James, and enjoy other characteristic adventures of the modern child. Put a TV label on the box, and you're away. I suppose that as long as they can read the labels we've absolutely nothing to worry about.

Fragment from "An Innumerate's Love Story"

... "Numeracy" (a word coined by the Crowther Council)—the ability to communicate effectively with those who have had a scientific education.

(Mr. BROWNING shouts through a laboratory window)

ALL'S past, then we part, girl? Love's over, won't work, it's Farewell to your talk of transistor pulse circuits? So...! I showed you my soul, hummed Lohengrin's Narration; You puzzled: "Corrosion?" You cried "Oxidation!" Metallurgical trifles of which I'd no knowledge. Is't Fate that we break thus, my female technologist? You'll hear my new verses? (She'll sit there and fidget till I cry "Pest! go talk to your computer digital!")

— J. E. HINDER

Toby Competitions

No. 102—Shoulder to Shoulder

THERE is a fine tradition of marching songs. Write a new one appropriate to Dr. Barbara Moore and other modern foot-sloggers.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, March 4, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 102, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 99

(Post-Graduate)

Competitors were asked to supply a paragraph and two exercises from a text-book of Public Relations aimed at teachers, barristers or clergymen. Hardly anybody tried the law. Far too many of the educational entries dealt solely with the problem of the mother who accosts the teacher and talks about her unidentifiable child. The clerical ones tended on the whole to be, in humour, rather heavily clerical. The general report must be, sadly, "very uninspired." The winner of the framed *Punch* original is:

L. GOLDMAN
2 NEWBOROUGH ROAD
SHIRLEY, SOLIHULL
WARWICKS

The Positive Approach allows Ministers, whilst condemning such Evil but pleasurable activities as Gambling or Adultery, to avoid the stigma of being a "spoilsport" or the reputation of always saying "Don't."

The Principle is to exhort your listeners in Positive terms to virtuous conduct rather than to prohibit sinful action. E.g. in discussing money matters never condemn Gambling as such but emphasize the superiority of Spiritual over material values, and praise Industry, Honesty and Charity.

Exercise I.—Rewrite the Ten Commandments using the Positive Approach.

Exercise II.—You are invited to address a "Ban the H-bomb" Rally. Write a synopsis of your address using the same Approach.

Among the runners-up were:

Among the leading visual aids, baggage ranks second only to the care-worn expression. A brief-case is recommended. An attaché-case, however full, may be generally suspected of being empty; suit-cases have an undesirable association with the word "holidays"; but with ingenuity one can always give the brief-case that impressive, bursting-with-homework appearance.

1. Supply polite responses to these parental comments:

- (a) "Of course, Octavia is highly-strung."
- (b) "I did well at school, of course, but John seems to take after his father."
- (c) "We never let her watch telly after eleven, of course."

2. Open Day lasts 2½ hours. Calculate how many words you will be able to say to each of 37 parents at 230 w.p.m. (Ignore breathing time.)

Edward Collis, 61 Dickinson Avenue, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts.

Now we come to the relationship with the pupil. The underlying principle here is a strong rearguard. As long as fountain-pens were widely used in the adult world, they were naturally to be frowned upon in school but, now that the ball-point is the instrument of choice, fountain-pens are allowable,

provided they are cumbersome and prone to run dry or blot. The constant aim is maximum discomfort and an incessant reminder of minority.

Exercise I.—Explain to a 14-year-old why navy bloomers are morally advisable.

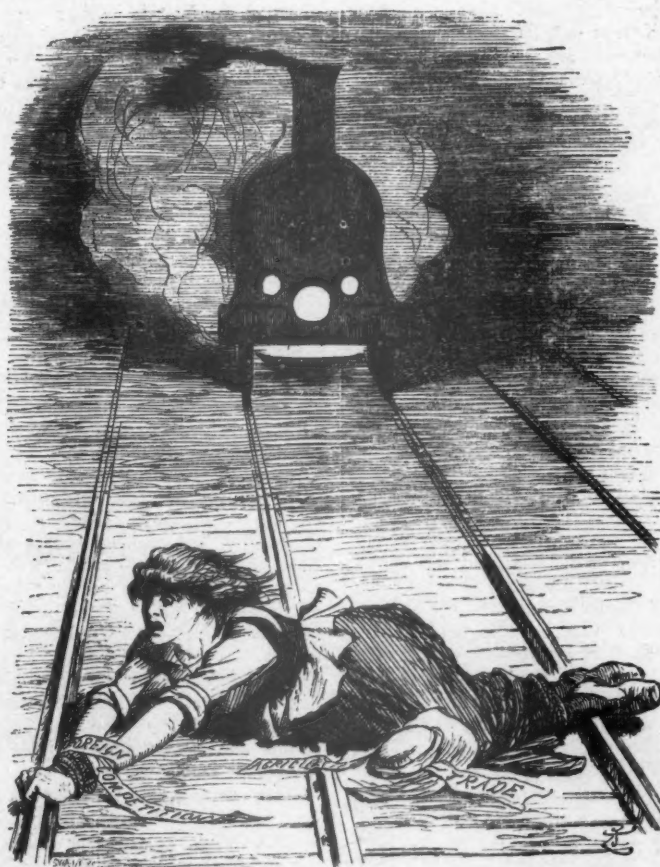
Exercise II.—Convince a 15-year-old that homework should come before extra-curricular games.

Mrs. A. M. Suter, 42, Willoughby Road, Wallasey, Cheshire

One-guinea book-tokens to the above, and to:

R. E. Ansell, 22 Sharmans Cross Road, Solihull, Warwickshire; J. A. Lindon, 89 Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey; R. R. Zanker, 37 Overleigh Road, Chester; Andrew T. Fabian, 37 Kings Hall Road, Beckenham, Kent; Peter Veale, 3 Shepherds Hill, London, N.6

THEN AS NOW



SHOCKING TRADE OUTRAGE!

(Scene from the New and Unpopular Sensation Drama of "The Monopoly-Monster and the Maid Forlorn.")

"OH! WHO'LL BRING A RESCUE OR TWO TO THE HELP OF A MUCH-INJURED MAID, THUS CRUELLY BOUND HAND AND FOOT, AND BY MISCHANCE RUTHLESSLY LAID ON THE LINES, IN THE PATHWAY OF PERIL? THE MONSTER SNORTS NEARER! BOHOO! 'TIS A MELODRAMA-CRISIS OF DANGER!—AND WHO'LL BRING A RESCUE OR TWO?"

January 21 1893



Boom or Zoom?

A VEHEMENT debate divides the City and the economists who advise, sometimes mislead, and usually confuse it. It is between those who believe that Britain is still safely on the neutral ground that separates inflation from deflation and those who fear that we are beginning to slip dangerously towards another inflationary crisis.

On the side of the optimists are such respectable bodies as the National Institute for Economic Research and the Federation of British Industries. The former found "no sign of inflation" in its latest review of the British economy. The latter has just revealed that nearly half the firms that answered its questionnaire on industrial trends are working below capacity. Where there is spare capacity there should be scope for further expansion without inflation. Giving his academic, professorial blessing to these views is Sir Roy Harrod who has recently roundly condemned the increase in Bank Rate as an essay in masochism unjustified by the needs of the economy at home.

On the more cautious, not to say fearful, side of the house are the voices of Authority symbolized by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England. Mr. Amory is so rightly proud of Britain's 1959 achievement, 10 per cent expansion in industrial output with virtual stability in prices, that he is determined not to let that precarious reconciliation slip through his fingers. He will meet the threat of inflation more than half-way.

As for Mr. Cobbold, every time he gets up to speak in public he says in very plain words that the Stock Exchange boom causes him concern. When these two men think more or less alike, it is well to assume that some consequential action will follow. Hence the general expectation in the City that there may be another slight turn of the screw, perhaps by restoring restrictions on hire purchase sales or by a really

tough Budget or, as some hair-shirt pundits have suggested, by yet another increase in Bank Rate.

The "all is well" school are supported by the recent attack of nerves in Wall Street. The fall in the Dow Jones Index from 682.6 on January 6 to around 610 is in itself a powerful sedative.

The "look-out, boys!" school have had their nerves jangled by the railway wage settlement and the fear that the British Transport Commission's climb-down plus what lies in store from Mr. Guillebaud are the prelude to another inflationary round of wage increases.

In Lombard Lane sympathies incline to the former school. The increased railway deficit will be inflationary only if no steps are taken in the Budget and in the Transport Commission's charges to offset the higher wages-bill. To argue, as some top people have suggested in their letters to *The Times*, that higher railway fares would

immediately lead to higher wages and salaries to all railway passengers and must, therefore, be inflationary, is to concentrate a lot of economic nonsense in very few words.

To return to the opening theme: there may not be an uncontrolled zoom but there is certainly a boom. An indication of where it has been most buoyant is provided by the changes in employment over the year 1959. The industries which are shown to be in the full flush of expansion are chemicals, motor-cars, engineering and retail distribution. Of the firms within each of these groups very high marks must go to Imperial Chemical Industries, Fisons (in spite of the gentle flick of the stick given to it by the Monopolies Commission), Ford Motors, Davy-United and Marks & Spencer. It is a mixed bag but one that should be well worth filling in the present rather uncertain depressed state of the market.

— LOMBARD LANE



Pursuit of Fungi

ONE of the sweet mysteries of life for me is that one never has enough mushrooms. Once or twice a decade the cry goes up that a glut is upon us; but it never percolates through to us, the consumer public. Do the great pickle lords armed with pre-knowledge send out their hosts at sun-up to slay the new-born? At one's greengrocer or stall the price will be just as high as pre-glut, the specimens browned umbrellas and not nacreous ovoids almost too young to be taken from their mammies.

In the distant past I remember a glut year when the daily help's husband rose for three weeks at the unnatural hour of five and filled tablecloths. At the decent price of sixpence a pound he made good tobacco money, I recall.

But for myself, the pursuit of fungi has been like the pursuit of happiness—come upon unaware. Armed with a trug I have got nothing but a bite from a horsefly for my pains; yet I have stopped the car at a cliff-edge and

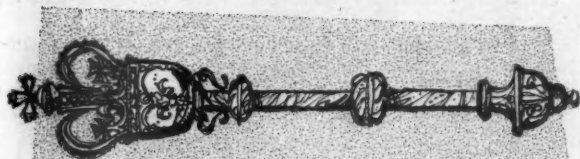
found the front wheel beside a cluster. Fried under a full moon, they were the stuff of which dreams are made.

"Seek ye in the horse-pastures!" is the cry in England, warring with my Italian grandmother's adage, "Only in woods, my child, and red chestnut at that." The two most thumbed bedside books with us are *Fungi and How to Know Them* and the *Handbook of Fungi*, yet I have never plucked up courage enough to snap the slender necks of ink-caps, fry puffballs or distinguish the edible *Amanita*—tubes instead of gills do something to my appetite I find. I have been tempted to approach the Professor, that ancient woodpecker, as he taps away with his little hammer at the boles of the oaks on the village green. He is detaching slabs of the ribbed cork stuff with which the Victorians masked their window-boxes. It might be a monumental truffle by the tenderness with which he stores it in the pocket of his knickerbockers. Hard to believe that this is the beef-steak fungus that is said to give out glorious red juice on cooking.

Did I mention truffles? Now these are altogether different. For these I would sell my grandmother, adages and all; if need be, train my own sow, conditioned from childhood as I am—for then the truffle in the rice jar was as imperative as the vanilla pod in the sugar canister. Which only goes to show that we are noses before we are eyes.

— STELLA CORSO

Essence



of Parliament

WHEN the cat's away, the mice do play, and they really begin to play with vigour when they hear that the cat is on his way home again. Mr. Macmillan returned to meet a barrage of questions. They peppered him on Tuesday on Africa, but no great hurt came to him out of that—indeed, to do them justice, the Opposition did not try very much to hurt. He received congratulations from unusual sources; from Mr. Silverman and Mr. Lipton and Mr. Stonehouse; and if Front Bench Opposition speakers—Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Callaghan—were a little more surly in their welcome it was, one felt, only Lars Porsena telling the ranks of Tuscany that they really need not cheer quite as hard as all that. By Thursday the Opposition back benches had got their wind and they gave the Prime Minister a somewhat rougher ride—particularly about releasing Dr. Banda, whom Mrs. Castle described a little oddly as “an outstanding shade of opinion.” But the Prime Minister was determined to be *suaviter in modo* to the Socialists, and he did not seem to mind very much what they said. Indeed between the two it was Mr. Gaitskell who had the heavier ragging. He got stuck like a gramophone needle in a groove, saying over and over again “I wish—I wish—I wish.” Conservatives started to laugh and Lord Hinchinbrooke perhaps laughed more loudly than the others, for Mr. Gaitskell suddenly snapped at him, “The longer the noble lord remains in this House the worse his manners become.”

More interesting at the moment is the speculation about revolt on the Right than about revolt on the Left. Major Legge-Bourke and Sir John Vaughan-Morgan on Monday did not much like some of the goings-on about the Free Trade Area, but that did not amount to very much. The nationalized industries are a more ticklish question. Is there going to be anything of a revolt about them? Mr. Nabarro had his usual bang at the Coal Board on Tuesday, but the trouble with Mr. Nabarro is that, as Swift wrote:

As for comic Aristophanes,

The dog too witty and too profane is.

Mr. Nabarro has made himself a little bit too much of a comic turn for his quite serious case to be taken quite seriously. Too much publicity, like a little learning, is a dangerous thing. Read him in *Hansard* and his attack on poor Mr. George, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power, reads as a bitter attack, but Mr. George did not give the impression of being greatly bothered by it, and indeed I doubt if anyone who heard it in the flesh would have expected him to have been much bothered. His invective was too obviously barbed with good humour. From someone else an accusation of “cooking the books” would be a serious

insult. From Mr. Nabarro it is almost a piece of good-natured raillery. It was all too obviously knockabout. Mr. Nabarro's explosions are all explosions in the air, and what everybody has been wondering at Westminster this week is whether there is a more important explosion brewing underground and therefore less easily detectable.

This underground explosion, if it is really being brewed, has not yet made its noises on the floor of the House. Indeed, by an Irish bull it has yet only appeared upstairs. At Westminster the main problem is still how to get a pair, and the main difficulty—to resurrect the Daltonian phraseology—that of too many Tories chasing too few Socialists. Twice this week—on Tuesday and Wednesday—the House just packed up. Up to the present Mr. Thorneycroft has only ventilated his grievance against the railway settlement in the press and on television. He has not yet carried his coals to Westminster—or at least not farther than a private committee-room upstairs. Everyone is waiting to hear whether he and his two ex-Treasury fellow musketeers can really make their case. No one is very happy about the railway settlement. Everyone would agree with Mr. Thorneycroft that it would be desirable to make the railways pay if it can be done. No one is quite sure whether it can be done. Until Mr. Thorneycroft has had a chance fully to develop his case Westminster can but suspend judgment, but somehow it does not look as if this revolt is going to rock the Government.

The Right Wing critics had another innings on Thursday, this time attacking the Government for not denationalizing enough steel. It culminated, though it did not perhaps quite end, in a rollicking farce. It was Mr. Peyton, of Yeovil, who this time got called first to put the Right-wing case. He did so with all the pleasant vigour of a man who is threatened with annexation by Dorset, and Mr. Nabarro sat by his side encouraging him with the fullest throated “Hear, hears” that can ever have been heard at Westminster since Cromwell removed that bauble. Indeed Mr. Nabarro's encouragements were so persistent that one almost got the impression that he regarded Mr. Peyton as his private toy. Eventually impatience so overcame him that he rose to his feet, apparently under the belief that two speeches made at the same time must necessarily be better than one. Mr. Thorneycroft sitting behind him had forcibly to press Jack back into his box amid loud and universal laughter. After these doings mundane matters such as the price of steel shares seemed small beer indeed, and Lord Hinchinbrooke had to bid Mr. Thorneycroft remove the albatross from around his neck and Sinbad the Sailor to cast off the Old Man of the Sea to a small and unappreciative audience.

There was not very much enthusiasm for Mr. Ward's announcement of the Missile Detection station at Fylingsdale Moors. There was so much, as there always is in these cases, that we had to take on trust, and we have ceased to be so very trusting. We were asked simply to accept the fact that four square miles of National Park were the only four square miles in England that were suitable, and at the end of it all these four square miles were only to give us four minutes of warning—a new version of the mile a minute which Mr. Chataway considered ruefully. It was just long enough, commented Mr. Brown, to say “Cheerio.” “Measures will be taken,” promised Mr. Ward, “to minimize the effect on the landscape.” Meanwhile their lordships were solving the problems of the more happy continent of Antarctica—more happy, commented Lord Denning, because at any rate there were no chaps there.

— PERCY SOMERSET

S for Sugar

(How they brought the good news from Paris to London)

"**S**UIT jackets close with classic buttons."

"Plastic buttons, P for Polly?"

"No, **CLASSIC**—C for Charley, L for London, A for Arthur, S for Sugar, twice, I for . . . for . . . Isabel."

"I for Ian, you mean?"

"Yes, I for Ian if you like it better, are you a Scot? C for Charley, **CLASSIC** buttons. Stop. For later in the day, heavily slubbed silk."

"What silk?"

"**SLUBBED**—S for Sugar, L for London, U for Uncle, B for Bobbie, twice, E for Edward, D for Duck. Slubbed."

"Sounds rum to me."

Pip—Pip—Pip.

"It's all right."

"Is that text or just a remark?"

"A remark. Let's go on from slubbed silk. Slubbed silk is used for two-pieces with low."

"Two pieces of what?"

"Just two-pieces with a hyphen—it's a kind of dress."

"O.K. . . . is used for two-pieces."

"Two-pieces with low self-belts."

"Felt belts, F for Freddy?"

"No, **SELF**—S for Sugar. Skirts are short."

"Is that word shirt or skirt?"

"**SKIRT**—K for . . . for . . ."

"Kipper?"

"Yes, K for Kipper, but always cover the knee, K for Kipper again. A colour liked in this house is a deep aubergine."

"Evergreen?"

"No—A for Arthur, U for Uncle . . ."

Pip—Pip—Pip.

"Look here let's settle for garnet, G for George, it's quicker."

"But you said some kind of green."

"Never mind, let it go at garnet. For evening, a princess P for Polly, R for Robert, line develops from a high, young bustline."

"Wow!"

"What was that?"

"Nothing, carry on."

Collections come but twice a year.—Y for Yellow, E for Edward, A for . . . Sorry.

—PHYLLIS HEATHCOTE

FOR
WOMEN



"Bewildered in the Maze of Schools"

THE trouble with all those splendid books that are bursting to make better parents of us is that they stop a chapter too soon. They get you safely through measles and the infant's emotional upheaval on entering the searing world of kindergarten and stop. You are forced to face that experience that proves you are finally an adult—inspecting a school—alone.

You may reply that anyone can be shown round a school and that your sister-in-law says she can always tell just from the Feel of the place whether Peregrine will be happy there. But don't kid yourself. How are you going to respond to the firm assertion that it is good for your child to change classrooms, shoes, teachers every forty minutes, take Latin, drop Latin, eat raw carrots, sleep sixteen to the bedroom, do P.T. before breakfast, learn the Thirty-Nine Articles, pursue a balanced programme of leisure-time pursuits and all on a well-drained gravel soil?

Parents should be prepared for a searching test of their common sense and powers of invention; try to remember in what year your child was born and in what impossibly far-distant year you wish him to enter the school. Ascertain the fees well beforehand so that you are spared the embarrassment of going noticeably pale in the Head's study. Care should be taken in dressing for the occasion, which should be classed as business rather than social, even though some preparatory schools may offer cups of tea. Dress to give an impression of respectability, intelligence, mature charm and solvency (in other words, your good suit).

If you have a husband with that useful knack of beginning a Do You

Remember Carruthers in '41 type of conversation with any male he meets, the actual interview will be straightforward. If not, you will have to think of some real questions and try to take in the answers. The Head in the natural order of things has most unfairly had much more experience of this kind of thing, and when you have talked enough to be neatly pigeon-holed as Fussy Mother, Typical Old Girl, Feminist sub. div. Higher Educ. for Girls, Health Faddist, or Vague, you are handed over to the secretary or porter to be shown round.

You will be spared nothing, from kettledrum-fulls of pink blancmange for 300 to the Self-Expression Art by Form II on the third floor. It is best to realize at once that truth will not help you. If you are rash enough to say how unpleasant you find the sight of six baths on long legs on a concrete floor in a room that is also a passage and where do they put their towels, your guide's reply will be impassioned, irrefutable and extremely long. Comments on size are also unwise (the Big Hall is never big enough), as is committing yourself as to the probable use of the room you are viewing. That useful little cupboard under the stairs crammed with sports gear and dismantled radio sets is the House Captain's study. Nor, unless you are particularly sure of your ground, should you venture to remark on what appears to have been being taught in the classrooms. Many a parent has come to grief trying to translate the Upper IV's French prep on the blackboard. So you had better just stick to How Nice every time a door is flung open before you.

The final testing comes when your

tour reaches the House-room, whence comes the sound of forty children at leisure, louder than a crowd sequence from *Ivan the Terrible*. The door is opened, the noise dies, the forty children rise to their feet and forty pairs of eyes gaze silently at you with total lack of interest, while you fail to take in whatever it is your guide is telling you. There is no comment suitable for making then.

— ANNE HAWARD

Semi-Circle

MY gardener (Monday afternoons),
My Daily (ten till four),
My Sitter-in (who won't begin
Till half-past eight or more)—

This is the trinity that sees
My every duty through,
To set me free to earn its fee
Of six pounds ten and two.

— HAZEL TOWNSON



Being Prepared

THE news that Girl Guides are fifty years old this year just takes me back. *Not* fifty years, of course, just a month or two. I still remember the good old days (no, *not* as old as that) when I was a wee, twee Brownie myself.

Well, don't let's be modest: I wasn't just a Brownie, *un simple soldat*, one of the other ranks: I was the Sixer of the Little People. And in case anybody's in any doubt, and turns to *Whitaker's Almanack*, or looks up my actual precedence in *Debrett*, let me say here and now, and once and for all, that I was very important indeed.

Why they made me a Little Person I don't really know. I've never been particularly small. Anyway, that didn't deter me from learning reef-knots and signals, and how to make stewed apple and tapioca pudding (the examiner got hiccups), and superior owl-noises round a *papier-mâché* toadstool. I threw a beanbag with the best, I could outrun any Goblin: I was the browniest Brownie of them all.

No wonder I was a super Guide: a quite outstanding Acorn in the quite outstanding Oak Patrol. I painted

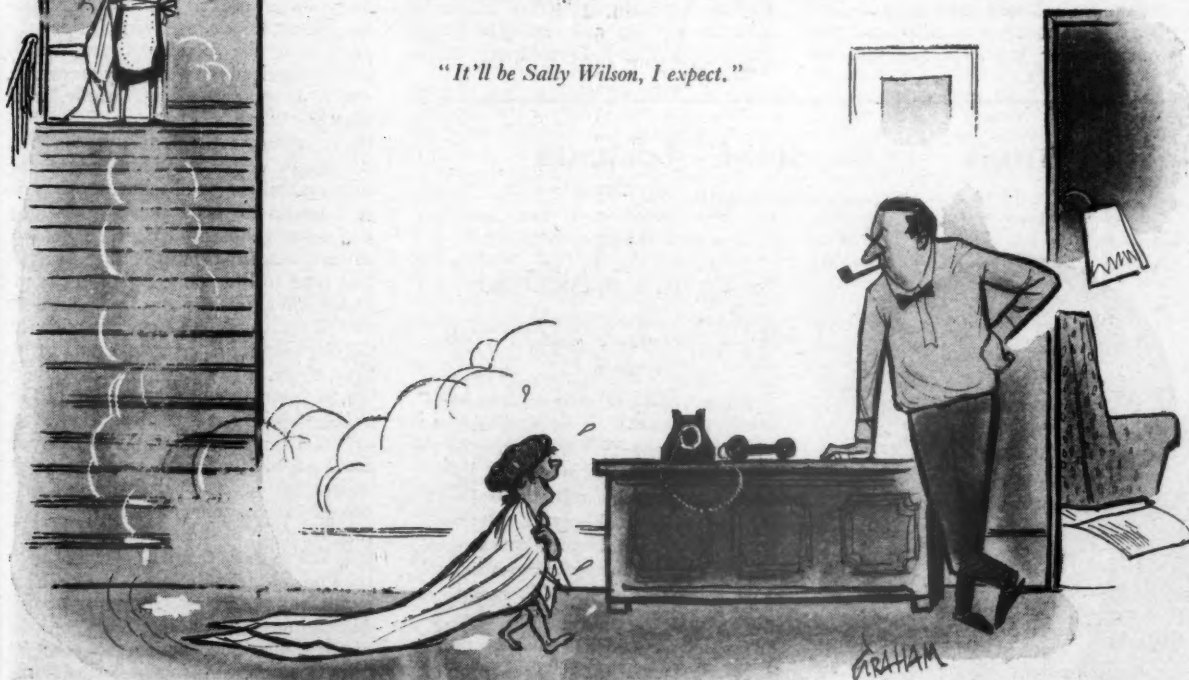
jam-jars madly, I escorted old ladies home (miles out of my way, and probably theirs) as my good turn for the day. I camped on the top of rainswept hills, I chortled round the fires, I burnt cheese-dreams (whatever they were) and baked baked-beans all day. I won my Child Nursing Badge at quite a precocious age, by prescribing constant rests and boiled eggs for children of all sizes; I won my Writers' and Authors' Badge by remembering when the dots went outside brackets. When tents collapsed, unexpectedly, on crowds of visiting parents, who pegged them up again but Acorn Richardson? When District Commissioners came to lunch, all decked with lanyards and whistles, who cut the cucumber up but Acorn R.?

Yes, I was always there, always smiling, always singing and Always Prepared (with belts and whistles and two clean handkerchiefs). So no wonder I'm jubilant at the Jubilee. No wonder the news just takes me back and makes me all nostalgic.

Tu-whit, tu-whoo, three cheers for the toadstool, and bake me another bean.

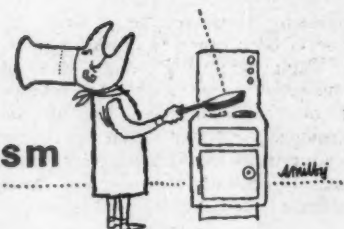
— JOANNA RICHARDSON

"It'll be Sally Wilson, I expect."





criticism



BOOKING OFFICE

Manipulated Any Good Minds Lately?

Advertising: A New Approach. Walter Taplin. Hutchinson, 25/-

SOMEbody in my trade of advertising recently made a list, supposedly after deep motivational research, of the seven reasons Why Mrs. Jones Bought It. (1) Because her husband said she couldn't have it, (2) Because it made her look thin, (3) Because it came from Paris, (4) Because her neighbours couldn't afford it, (5) Because nobody had it, (6) Because everybody had it, (7) Because it was different. Mr. Taplin is currently the Research Fellow in Advertising and Promotional Activity at the London School of Economics. His mind is a powerful precision instrument, and he writes with the pitiless abstraction of an academic economist who knows he's got a captive audience of other academic economists or would-be a.e.'s. He

pays advertising the unusual compliment of presenting it without anger, flippancy, patronage, envy or ignorance. But as his book sells for 25s. for two hundred pages without passion or prejudice, pictures, dialogue, scare-headlines or advertisements, I am afraid only compulsions 4, 5 and 7 could work on Mrs. Jones to buy it. For some reason advertising, subjected either to partisan praise or to honest, objective analysis, doesn't make life-enhancing reading. Attacks on it (e.g. by Marghanita Laski *passim* or Francis Noel-Baker in the House of Commons) have much more value judged as sheer entertainment. They have other values, too, of course. They strengthen the determination of advertising practitioners to be delicious and sustaining and refreshingly mild because absolutely pure.

Mr. Taplin has taught me two good new words, oligopoly and splurcases. He has deduced that there is a case for advertising. And, as an outsider, he has mapped the boundaries of the

darkling wood in which so many of us, either because we are lost or because we like our sylvan life, are busy, in one or another sense, climbing trees. He will make you think carefully about the structure of a subject about which almost nobody does think much, and even then only intermittently.

It is the fact that advertising is so largely aimed at the emotional, non-rational, half-asleep part of your mind that accounts for its power and, if you are of Miss Laski's or Mr. Noel-Baker's persuasion, its danger.

I don't say advertising is anti-social. But of its nature it breaks two rules of social behaviour that we learn if not at our mothers' knees at least in school: first rule "Don't boast about yourself," second rule "Don't repeat yourself." I suspect that much of the dis-ease about advertising felt by the people Mr. Taplin calls the "intellectually fastidious" comes from their having these rules broken across their subconscious minds. Even inside the profession the breakages are hardly ever recognized for what they are worth, and I mean, perhaps regretfully, what they are worth. Very, very few advertisers make repetition pay its full dividends. Vestiges of childhood training remain, and they will repeat themselves a thousand times (a year's campaign), but not ten thousand times. They will discard a form of words that has not had time to become a slogan, a brand-image still as indistinct as though it were etched on bread. The changes give the public something new to read, or to look at, or to think about. But there would often have been more profit in going on with the first idea.

Mr. Taplin has examined so many of the aspects of advertising so carefully and so fairly that I am sorry he hasn't turned his analytic mind to repetition, that keystone of the advertising edifice. It is worth more than the glancing half-page he gives it. He says that repetition involves the danger (to the advertiser) of decreasing returns in terms of the public's attention, up to the point of complete unconsciousness of the repeated advertisements. But that's only true of *unclever* repetition. Clever

THESE LOOKS SPEAK VOLUMES

A Panorama of Publishers



23. W. A. R. COLLINS

BORN 1900. Joined the family firm after Harrow and Oxford, and in 1945 became the fifth William Collins in succession to be chairman. (A son and grandson, William VI and VII, are waiting in the wings.) As a publisher, his enthusiasms are as catholic as his interests—Pasternak, Lord Montgomery, books on insects, books on cricket, he finds them all fascinating. The family are remarkable sportsmen, Wm. VI being a triple blue, and Wm. V having played at Wimbledon. He used to hunt twice a week and still plays golf.

advertising repetition has, I think, so far never been tested to breaking point. Mr. Taplin might reply that a study of its potentialities would be the province not of the economist but of the neurologist; and that I am up to the old advertising trick of suggesting new wants. Certainly Mr. Taplin's book satisfies a number of long-felt ones.

— RICHARD USBORNE

NEW FICTION

Clea. Lawrence Durrell. *Faber*, 16/-
The Witch. Nika Hulton. *Hart-Davis*, 16/-
The Great Fortune. Olivia Manning. *Heinemann*, 16/-
Pedro Paramo. Juan Rulfo. *Evergreen Books*, 9/9

WITH *Clea* Mr. Durrell completes the grand strategy of the four novels in which he wittily examines the nature of love against the background of the shimmering decadence of Alexandria. In *Justine*, *Balthazar* and *Mountolive* he worked from different view-points over the same characters and period; in *Clea* he advances to the second war, when Darley, writing in the first person, returns from the island and has an affair with the blonde artist with whom we are already familiar. In this final book Nessim and Justine and Mountolive are no more than shadows, while Balthazar and Pombal are actively downstage. The shameless Scobie has been beatified by the Muslims, and the bath in which he brewed his firewater is now a shrine. We learn why Pursewarden died. Like the earlier novels, *Clea* is an exotic patchwork of styles; at his best Mr. Durrell is extremely exciting, at his worst seriously guilty of over-writing. He is a poet who lays off his liking for metaphysics with farce and melodrama. The ancient corruption of Alexandria, which lies at the core of these books, is brilliantly suggested. At times their high incidence of sexual oddity seems part of a too calculated formula, but taken as a whole they are surely one of the major achievements of our generation in the field of the novel.

Lady Hulton was brought up among *émigré* White Russians in Paris in the 'twenties, and in *The Witch*, using as narrator a young girl, she gives a series of delightful impressions of their eccentric society. The girl's family, living in a shabby suburb, is dominated by two women: one is Great-aunt Olga Petrovna, who as well as being a witch is ceaselessly critical of the professional ability of Hannibal and Alexander, and the other is an aunt who believes in reincarnation and whose French "r"s sound "like a cavalry charge on a stony battlefield." They all move in the closed circle of their fellow-aristocrats, inviting one another to stay on their sequestered estates and zealously preserving all the niceties of the hierarchy. Lady Hulton looks back with affectionate irony to their absurdities; wittily

written, her book is studded with good phrases and is often exceedingly funny.

Miss Manning's new novel, *The Great Fortune*, is about the chequered beginnings of the marriage of an English couple in Rumania during the phony war. She gets the atmosphere of neutral Bucharest, with its savage cleavage between rich and poor, its constant intrigues and its pampered disbelief in the reality of the war so well that I was sorry not to be more interested by her characters. Her hero is a woolly left-wing lecturer who can think only of his production of *Troilus* while Paris is falling; he carries tolerance for others to the point of feebleness. His wife is made of stouter stuff, but most of the rest of the English colony are too second-rate to be very good company.

According to his publishers, Juan Rulfo is considered in Mexico to be its most promising writer. Judging by *Pedro Paramo*—translated by Lysander Kemp—competition in those parts must be limited. This slim sepulchral fantasy, heavy with peasant superstition, follows a youth who is searching for his father in a mountain village where everyone he speaks to turns out to be dead. In spite of this they remain pretty active, and even violent, although one solemn conversation takes place in the comfort of a mutual tomb. Primitive passions and hatreds go on smouldering in this self-conscious literary limbo, and the dank smell of necrolatry is over all.

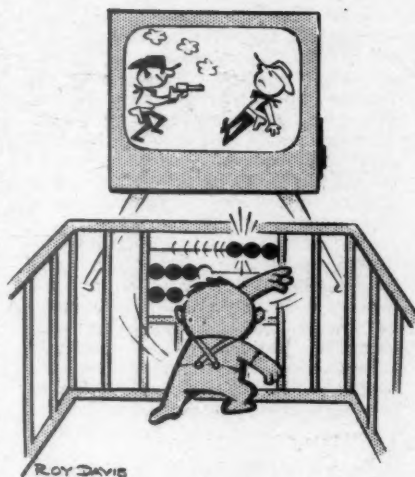
— ERIC KEOWN

THE CRUEL SEA LORDS

A Social History of the Navy—1793–1815. Michael Lewis. *Allen and Unwin*, 42/-

This is one of those rare historical studies that fascinate, tantalize and end by exasperating the common reader. The late Professor of History at Greenwich is presumably the best man to give us a social history of the Royal Navy during the "Great War" against Napoleon, and there are certainly no sins of commission in his book. It is lucid, most readably written and its four hundred and sixty pages distil a vast amount of material. Roughly, it is the story of brave men badly served by a niggardly country. Good fellows, all but a few seems to be Mr. Lewis's charitable but sea-breezy verdict. The pay was deplorable, the food disgusting, insanity frequent, drunkenness occupational—and encouraged by H.M. Admiralty. One man in eight ruptured himself handling casks and hauling ropes. Fever—Yellow Jack, Bronze John, Lind's "Black Vomit," Hospital, Gaol, Camp, Low, Slow, Nervous, Putrid and Petechial—was rife throughout the Fleet. This is the bad old Navy of "rum, sodomy and the lash."

Mr. Lewis sins by omission only. The Nore Mutiny is merely noted in passing and there is little or no indication of the political and religious feelings of the Lower Deck. Strangely, there is no



mention of Jane Austen's Upper Deck either. Captains Benwick and Wentworth may be conventional figures but one would have thought that Mr. Price Senior at least rated a mention.

— JOHN RAYMOND

OTHER NEW BOOKS

The Waterfowl of the World, Vol. III. Jean Delacour. *Country Life*, 6 gns.

This third volume completes the detailed survey of the *Anatidae* family on which M. Delacour and Mr. Peter Scott have expended such immense care and skill, though a fourth, dealing with morphology, anatomy, sport, conservation and other general subjects, is planned to appear later. Here are the Eiders, the Pochards, Perching and Stiff-tailed Ducks, Scoters, Golden-eyes and those fascinating Mergansers: their characteristics, habits, distribution and adaptability to captivity—plus, of course, their portraits. This is a work, it ought to be said, for specialists. The week-end birdwatcher can only gaze with astonished humility at Mr. Scott's twenty colour plates, each overflowing with beautifully drawn but frighteningly similar ducks, and admit that he will never identify at sight an immature male American Golden-eye in transitional plumage. As for the thirty ducklings (all different, as the stamp dealers say) on Plate XI, one feels it would be fairer if they had watermarks. There are forty-six distribution maps, and the book is most handsomely printed and produced.

— H. F. E.

Selfridge. Reginald Pound. *Heinemann*, 25/-

There is much to admire in Gordon Selfridge. On the whole he was a good employer, and his unorthodox Middle West approach to trading was very healthy for his English competitors. No other store at that time would have

thought of having Blériot's monoplane in its window the morning after it had flown the Channel. Many of the institutions we now accept, such as window displays after hours and bargain basements, were introduced by him.

Unfortunately, as so often happens with those who confuse work with moral purpose, he awoke late to the fun he was missing and became wildly extravagant, loading actresses with jewels and giving enormous parties. When eventually the bank assumed control of Selfridge's and he retired at eighty-three on a small pension, he had no savings or insurances, but faced his new condition with exemplary fortitude, taking cheerfully to buses and a pipe. In this very readable biography Mr. Pound shows him to have been humourless but far from unlikeable.

— E. O. D. K.

Shakespeare's Wooden O. Leslie Hotson. *Hart-Davis*, 30/-

By his own special method of putting together innumerable nuggets of information, dug up from curious sources, Dr. Hotson demonstrates (to my mind conclusively) that Shakespeare's plays were written for theatre-in-the-round. He argues that the Elizabethan stage developed from the elaborate wagons of the mystery plays; first of all it was only two such wagons, each with a poop-like edifice at its outer end, run together across an inn-yard which had galleries

round it; when special theatres were built the wagons became a permanent stage with the tiring-house beneath it, and the poops became skeletal, transparent, structures which, with the help of boards, ladders and curtains, could become for the moment houses, castles, heaven, hell, cliffs or what have you. This does away with all the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the "inner stage" theory. The argument from the nuggets is of varying strength, but hangs together; and the argument that this is by far the most effective way yet suggested for staging Elizabethan plays is extremely convincing.

— P. D.

CREDIT BALANCE

Literature and Western Man. J. B. Priestley. *Heinemann*, 42/- . An enormous but very personal production. The patchiness (Milton gets six lines in a bracket) is irrelevant, as is the unfashionable tendency to say "A is great but B is not." What is important is the honest and engaging intelligence trying to define, from an extraordinary catch-all of reading, what Western Man stands for and why it matters.

The Banquet Years. Roger Shattuck. *Faber*, 36/- . Survey of Parisian *avant-garde* 1885-1925 based on studies of Henri Rousseau, Erik Satie, Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire. Macédoine of gossip, bibliographical research and penetrating critical flashes. Jazzed-up learning may be reprehensible but it is often enjoyable.

Professor Shattuck's range is from anecdote to a serious attempt at defining "modernism": it was late nineteenth century exploration of the frontier between Art and Humour that ended the long innings of Renaissance Man.

Light Blue, Dark Blue. Macdonald, 15/- . Anthology of Oxford and Cambridge writing, surely not the best available. Fiction not only derivative but derivative from old models. Poetry, with a few exceptions by established younger poets, very like the poetry of twenty years ago. Think-pieces full of petulant revulsion from Left and Right. No scientists represented. Interesting in a rather horrible way.

Demi-Paradise. Jasper Rootham. *Chatto and Windus*, 18/- . Golden days at Tonbridge in the 'twenties, Cambridge, Whitehall, Vienna, and even the war, lovingly remembered. Gentle words of affectionate praise for beloved musicians. Simple, sincere reflections on weaknesses of the age. Signs of a doggedly honest mind inside a conventional and oddly old-fashioned style.

AT THE PLAY

Girl on the Highway (PRINCES)

IT is often said that a play with courtroom scenes in it cannot fail. Certainly the standard of legal drama has been well maintained in recent years by such pieces as *Witness for the Prosecution* and *The Caine Mutiny Court-martial*, in both of which the tension was engineered to a nicety. It is all the more surprising to come on a play that makes as little attempt as *Girl on the Highway* to get excitement from a court case.

In this a chauffeur who has given a fifteen-year-old a lift in a rainstorm is accused of raping her; the child, an awful little creature, has brought the case. From the start it is quite clear to us that the man is innocent, and it quickly becomes equally clear to the assize court. Things look so bleak for the counsel for the prosecution that we tell ourselves we are only being led up the garden path in order to be more utterly dumbfounded by the series of squibs that are even now warming up in the author's hat (Ernest Borneman's, by the way).

But not at all. More and more witnesses make it more and more impossible for the chauffeur to be convicted; there is no really dramatic stroke before the time comes for the defence counsel, a woman, to get up and wipe the floor with the prosecution. Mr. Borneman has apparently been content to give us what might have been a one-sided case from life except for the



William Palmer—BRIAN REECE

Hanna Kingsley, Q.C.—JOAN MILLER

PUNCH EXHIBITIONS

"Punch in the Cinema." Gaumont Cinema, Coventry.
"Punch with Wings." Exhibition Hall, Queens Buildings, London Airport Central.

preposterous latitude he allows to some of the witnesses, who would have been jumped on by the sleepest judge for their brazen music-hall turns in the box. His judge is of the kind who has to have the simplest slang translated for him; most of the other clichés of legal reporting are also there. His choice of such an unsavoury case is quite unjustified by anything in the play; in the circumstances a plain piece of burglary would have done just as well. He never explains what the child stands to gain by so viciously framing up an innocent

REP SELECTION

Citizens', Glasgow, *The Alchemist*, unspecified run.
Dundee Rep, *Breath of Spring*, until March 5th.
Playhouse, Nottingham, *Concubine Imperial*, until March 5th.
Marlowe, Canterbury, *The Birthday Party*, until February 27th.

stranger, and I think he cheats by introducing a sinister woman in the background with no more than a suggestion—unless I missed something—that she has been pulling the strings for the child.

The acting is not remarkable. Joan Miller is the winning counsel, eloquent and a little outsize, and David Horne is the losing one, rotundly wordy; Brian Reece as the chauffeur gives a competent straight performance, and Susan Burnet, who was the terrible child in *Flowering Cherry*, suggests the chilling duplicity of a Lolita. Among the chain of witnesses there are a few good little studies of character.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Saint Joan (Old Vic—17/2/60), stirring production. *The Wrong Side of the Park* (Cambridge—10/2/60), Margaret Leighton triumphs in interesting new play. *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'be* (Garrick—17/2/60), another lively low-life musical from Theatre Workshop.

—ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Sink the Bismarck!—*Two-Way Stretch*

THIS may seem incomprehensible to the thousands of simple souls who can be quite certain whether or not they'll enjoy a film as soon as they've heard what it's about, but the fact remains—I don't think *Sink the Bismarck!* (Director: Lewis Gilbert) should have been filmed at all; because I don't think it's possible for anyone to make a good film of it. They've done their best here, but by its very nature the story as a whole is impossible to convey in terms of human character and action on the screen. The human story here, of the fictitious Captain Shepard (who, they have to point out in a foreword, is "in no



(Sink the Bismarck!)

First Sea Lord—LAURENCE NAISMITH

Captain Shepard—KENNETH MORE

A.C.N.S.—GEOFFREY KEEN

way intended to represent" the real man concerned) and the starry-eyed Wren officer who worships him at the Admiralty—this is really quite irrelevant to the main story as announced in the title. Its inclusion amounts to an admission that this main story would not have been popularly interesting enough without it; in other words, as I say, the story of the sinking of the *Bismarck* cannot be made into a satisfactorily entertaining film.

Consider. It can't be made intelligible otherwise than by alternating pictures of ships in battle with scenes in the War Room at the Admiralty where the strategy is worked out and the high-level commands are given. That is what we get here. But pictures of big ships in battle, however well the model shots are done and matched with fragmentary photographs of the real thing, are bound to have a certain sameness; and as for the War Room, where the action is advanced almost entirely by the arrival of radio messages . . . After a time I developed an exaggerated sensitiveness and could think of nothing, as each new message arrived, except to wonder how they were going to contrive to have it summarized or read aloud *this* time.

On the other hand, if (disregarding the title) you take the picture as a story about Captain Shepard (Kenneth More) and the Wren (Dana Wynter) you must admit it's very thin and conventional. Shepard is the familiar ruthless, dedicated disciplinarian with a soft spot; the Wren, like most heroines in British films, has almost no individuality. Here is a test: imagine either of them in different circumstances. If there were

no question of discipline, how would his behaviour differ from that of the most colourless character you ever heard of? How would hers? You have nothing to go on except your impression of the personalities of Mr. More and Miss Wynter—which depends on an unconscious mixture of memories of the sort of thing you have seen them do in films before. Whereas real characters react individually even to everyday circumstances, let alone to strange ones.

There are also the Germans, behaving in (type-) character and speaking accented English, and the inevitable, ritual moments of lower-deck comic relief, and the scenes that end with curtain-lines ("We've got a chance, sir. I think we've got a chance!"). I'm sorry to be in a minority about this; it's worthily and carefully done, and great numbers of people will come out convinced that they enjoyed it. Well, good luck to them; I wish I had.

Ask an average moviegoer what makes *Two-Way Stretch* (Director: Robert Day) so much funnier than most popular British farces of an apparently similar kind, and he will say it is the star, as in such a case he always does. And certainly Peter Sellers here is brilliantly amusing and immensely valuable; but there are also innumerable laughs in which he is not personally involved, many of them—this is the point—laughs that can't be credited to any one person. This piece of roaring nonsense about an absurd prison from which three crafty inmates break out unnoticed to steal a million's-worth of diamonds, afterwards breaking in again unnoticed with the perfect alibi,



[Knight Errant]

Toby Hollister—WILLIAM FOX
Liz Parrish—KAY CALLARD

Peter Parker—RICHARD CARPENTER
Alan Knight—JOHN TURNER

has ingenious comic incident and detail, observantly exaggerated Cockney dialogue, inventively ludicrous characterization, skilful direction (notice the flashing intricacies of such a scene as the furious clearing-up of the cell at authority's approach), and—above all—speed, as well as clever players. In short, its effectiveness, like that of any successful film, is the result of a happy collaboration, in which the writers (this is by John Warren and Len Heath—additional dialogue, Alan Hackney) are more important than most people realize.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Also in London: *Night and Fog*, a horribly, terribly moving half-hour about the Nazi concentration camps, made by Alain Resnais, whose *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (17/2/60) continues. There are two new Italian ones: *Man of Straw—the Seducer*, a simple marital-infidelity story, touching and full of character, and *Venice, the Moon and You*, an extremely glossy colour comedy with good bits. The excellent British comedy *A Touch of Larceny* (17/2/60), and Disney's *White Wilderness* ("Survey," 6/1/60) are still available, and there is also Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which wears surprisingly well after thirty years.

Releases: *Odds Against To-morrow* (6/1/60), an admirably-done crime story with unusual depth; *Operation Petticoat* (10/2/60), enjoyably amusing U.S. naval comedy; and *Two-Way Stretch* (see above).

— RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Very Errant

THERE is this to be said in favour of "Knight Errant" (Granada): it does not seem to have been planned with any very eager eye on the U.S. market. Unlike "Dick and the Duchess" it contains no American accents to console the viewer in Hoboken, and there is no gratuitous brutality to match the goings on in such imported products as "Staccato." Also on the credit side it must be acknowledged that the production often makes striking use of the camera, that the sets are usually convincing, the filmed sequences integrated with reasonable smoothness and the pace, within the limits of the scripts, kept at a fair jog-trot. The limits of the scripts, however, are a major consideration, and it is in this department that the series falls flat on its face. This is an old old cry in the world of television—the quality of thriller scripts cannot be expected to be more than occasionally satisfactory, because there just aren't enough writers to keep up with the demand. I hope that this may eventually mean that the demand decreases, so that we get fewer and better blood-and-thunders. A recent story, "The Creditor" by Robert Holmes, was wildly incredible from the word go, and became more and more ludicrous as it dragged its padding from one contrived climax to another. William Fox and John Stratton belted out the melodrama at full blast, John Turner fitted briefly in and out as the handsome 'tec of the title, and Richard Carpenter struggled

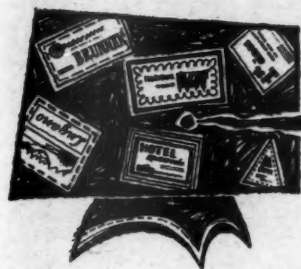
with one of the most excruciating hero's-stooge characters in the history of fictional detection, and I'm casting my mind back now as far as Poe by way of Sexton Blake and Tinker. All things considered, the question remains: must television be encouraged to kill off this lively minor art by making it a laughing-stock?

Billy Wright, looking as though he has been told to seem cheerful while modelling a glamorous knitted sweater for men, presides over the BBC's fortnightly "Junior Sportsview" with nervous charm, and probably brings joy to a million schoolboys. He's not yet at ease in the medium, and the show, apart from the filmed sporting events, tends to creak. Incidentally what with this, and "Sportsview" and "Sportsview Special," and the breathless deluge on Saturday afternoons, the BBC is ahead of ITV in the sports department. If this is a result of high policy I am surprised that the people who enjoy watching quaint little cartoon men advertising tea or cough sweets are not considered likely to appreciate a few more games of soccer. There is need for a survey here.

I suppose one of the high-spots of television ritual drama is still the moment in "Gardening Club" when Percy Thrower enters the greenhouse in the BBC's Midland studio, closes the door, removes his jacket, and hangs it on a nail. The scene is always taken in silence—I don't believe there is even a trace of background music to heighten the suspense. Mr. Thrower plays it calmly yet purposefully: he is in command of the situation: it is obviously terribly hot in here after the breezy cabbage patch over in the far corner of the studio, but he is prepared to endure that for our sakes: and the scene that is to follow (the potting of a begonia, or the deft blending of some compost for a couple of seedlings) is likely to prove so overpowering that a pause in the plot is essential. One is reminded of the maid who used to come in through the centre doors just before the climax in the second act to ask if madam wished the curtains drawn; and the effect is just as tense. I mention it because it is an example of the mastery way in which the producer, Paul Morby, has managed to bring excitement into a programme of which the subject, at the outset, must have seemed dramatically sterile. Add the comforting, rural voices of the participants, their obvious love for the subject, the uncanny expertise with which the gardening jobs are done, the incredible cleanness of the soil, loam muck and phosphates used as props (I have seen Mr. Thrower handling John Innes base fertilizer which looked practically edible), and the wealth of solid information that is packed into a session, and you have the constituents of one of the most satisfying television items available.

— HENRY TURTON

Have B.A.— Will Travel



Further jottings from
the Diaries of A. J. WENTWORTH
as recorded by H. F. Ellis

2. A Missed Opportunity

IT is all very well to say that all experience is an arch, as Tennyson somewhere or other claims, wherethro' gleams that untravelled world and so on and so forth. I used often to recite the passage, I remember, in my younger days when things went a little awry—to myself, that is: one does not declaim poetry aloud up and down the corridors of a first-class preparatory school!—and was much comforted by it at times. We live and learn, I suppose, would be another way of saying the same thing. But I very much doubt whether Alfred Tennyson, with all respect to his memory, ever had such a day as I have had, with nothing to show for it but a torn trouser-leg and a pocket full of unwanted oats. All experience indeed! A hundred and fifty miles all told, and an umbrella riddled with small shot through no fault of my own, at the end of it. What kind of untravelled world gleams through that particular arch, one is tempted to ask.

Whatever it may be, I feel disinclined this evening, with what I fear may be a heavy cold coming on, to explore it. One begins very seriously to doubt whether the insertion of my advertisement in *The Times*, asking for short-term work in positions of trust, etc., was altogether wise. Quite apart from being pestered with second-hand furniture down here in Fenport, some of the offers of employment made to me through the post have been ridiculous. One does not become a Bachelor of Arts, I should hope, in order to exercise dogs from 2.30 to 4.0 p.m. every afternoon except Thursdays. Nor am I the man, as those who know me best will agree, to recommend hosiery to total strangers on a commission basis! There are times when I really think the world has gone mad.

Still, to be fair, as I always try to be, the post in search of which I set off to Wiltshire early this morning appeared to be very much more in my line of country and might indeed have suited me well, but for a chain of ill-luck such as I have rarely experienced. An opening as companion-secretary to a gentleman temporarily incapacitated by an accident while hunting is the kind of thing I am looking for, at twelve guineas a week with board and keep and travelling expenses refunded after the interview if unsuccessful. I had little doubt in my mind, as I walked to the station to catch the 8.45 local to Southampton, that provided this Colonel Ripley proved to be of a congenial cast of mind we should very soon come to

terms. Nor have I any reason to doubt *now* that we should have done so, had I been permitted to meet the gentleman.

Little is to be gained by jotting down the details of this vexatious business. The milk has been spilt, in every sense of the old phrase, and there is an end of it. But I owe it to myself to point out that had adequate transport been available at Stenshall nothing of the kind would have arisen. I was thunderstruck when a rather dull-witted porter there told me that no buses ran past the Manor House on Wednesdays. "There was a car come to meet the 11.48 down from Blandford," the man said. "But I doubt it could have been for you, seeing you just got off the 12.6 up from Templecombe. Not that Mrs. Ripley didn't go back empty in a bit of a taking, at that."

There seemed no point in explaining to the fellow that I had been badly advised by a ticket-inspector at Bournemouth West, so I simply asked him what I had better do. After some thought he told me in his slow country way that Grimley's van would be coming "up street" in a minute or two and might be able to drop me "there or thereabouts," as he was pleased to put it. Having no alternative I agreed to this curious approach to my future employer, and very soon found myself jolting along in a bucket seat beside a civil young man, who seemed genuinely sorry that he had not the time to take me round past the Manor gates. He was going "sort of more along the back of their place, like," he told me (how strangely these people talk!) but would drop me at the nearest point, where I could cut across a couple of fields and up through the farm. "Ten minutes," he said, "at the outside," and late though I was it seemed the best thing to do. One cannot pick and choose, really, when nothing else offers.

I could not foresee, of course, that a heavy downpour of rain would catch me out in the open as soon as I had entered the second of the two fields indicated to me. Naturally I had my umbrella with me, but I most certainly did not wish to appear for my interview with sodden trouser legs and I therefore turned left-handed and made all possible haste along the hedgerow to a barn or shed which stood in the near corner of the field, intending to shelter there through the worst of it. It was here that I had my first stroke of

misfortune. The building was very dark inside, and though I could just make out that it contained some kind of machinery I had no warning that there was need to exercise more than my usual caution until I happened, while shaking my umbrella, to engage the crook of it with what must I suppose have been a lever or handle. I gave no more than a slight tug, to free it, and at once noticed a whirring and clanking noise suggesting that some sort of mechanical operation had been set in motion. Then a considerable quantity of oats, a very considerable quantity, was precipitated over my head and shoulders from above.

This incident, though momentarily startling and confusing in the indifferent light, was not in itself, to one who is accustomed to life's ups and downs, more than a passing inconvenience, and I should not have mentioned the mishap had not its immediate consequences proved so vexatious. Oats are less easy to brush off the clothing than some other kinds of cereal, and though I did my best in the few minutes that elapsed before the rain stopped I suppose it was inevitable that I should leave what amounted to a trail behind me on resuming my walk. Be that as it may, I soon became aware that I was being followed by several farmyard fowls, which appeared from nowhere after the manner of these creatures. Their number and speed increased rapidly, to my dismay, so that by the time I had reached the further hedge, beyond which the roofs and chimneys of what must be Manor Farm were clearly visible, they had become a serious embarrassment. I am not easily put out, but no one cares to arrive for an appointment attended by a flock of gaping poultry. I therefore made an attempt to drive them off with gestures of my umbrella, which I still think was the only sensible course in the circumstances. There was an outburst of cackling and one or two fowls rose into the air with the usual exaggerated loss of feathers, and I was preparing to take advantage of the diversion to slip through a gateway when I heard the sound of running feet and a man's voice from beyond the hedgerow shouting "Get over left there, quick!"

Not knowing to whom he was speaking I checked the swing I was taking at a particularly pertinacious hen (a White Wyandotte, I think) and unluckily lost my grasp on my



umbrella, which flew into the hedge some distance to my right, where it lodged quivering. At once there was a further cry of "There he goes!" followed by the roar of firearms, and I found myself temporarily blinded by a *mélée* of excited hens.

"Hi!" I called out. "I say there!"

"What the devil are you doing?" a rough voice replied, and looking up I saw a tallish man in gaiters at the gateway, with a younger fellow (looking pretty scared, I thought) behind him.

"I might well ask you that," I answered, getting to my feet in no very good temper. "Is it your custom in this part of the country to shoot at visitors without warning?"

"There was a fox," the younger fellow said sheepishly. "In the hedge yonder. They get after the fowls, see?"

"Fox indeed!" I said, and without another word I strolled across and retrieved my umbrella, which, to my great mortification, I found to be shot through and through.

"You tailored un good and proper, Fred," the tall man said with a laugh.

"Somebody will have to pay for this," I remarked sternly. "It is a most outrageous thing."

"You was trespassing," the man said. "Creeping about the hedges. Who are you, and what do you want?"

"See them birds pecking at his turn-ups?" the young hobbledohoy put in. "He's mostly chock-a-block with grain, or something of that, if you ask me."

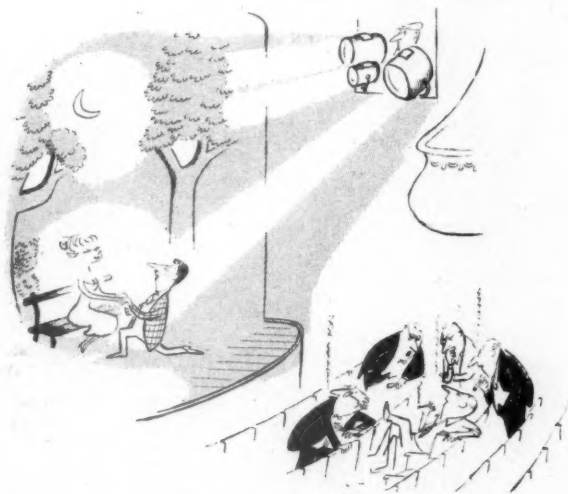
"So that's the game, eh?" the other man said.

"My name is Wentworth," I told them, sick and tired of this meaningless folly. "I have an urgent appointment with Colonel Ripley. Be so good as to direct me to the Manor House at once, please."

My manner must have made it clear to them with whom they had to deal. But even so I was obliged to show these two fools my letter from the Colonel before they would permit me to pass. "Best call in at the farmhouse and see Mrs. Jellaby," the elder said finally, perhaps in a belated attempt to make amends. "She'll maybe run you up in the Land-Rover."

One would have thought that I had had enough trouble and





delay already, and might now hope that the final stages of this tiresome journey would be comparatively plain sailing. But I have often found that if ill-luck dogs one at the start of a day it is difficult to shake it off completely before evening. One thing leads to another, as they say. Had I not been opening and shutting my umbrella as I descended the steepish track into the farmyard (in order, of course, to see whether the ribbing had been as irretrievably ruined as the fabric), I dare say I should not have been attacked, or at least menaced, by what at first glance I took to be a bull. With the quick instinct of a countryman I made a sideways leap on to a kind of trestle or stand for milk churns that chanced to be at the side of the track, not knowing of course that it was in fact a wheeled trailer—still less that my weight would raise the shaft, or towing-bar, from the ground and set the contraption in motion.

Heigh-ho! It's a weary world at times. Tennyson and his precious arch keep recurring to my mind as I sit by my gas fire and ponder on the tricks that fate can play. To the Greeks, of course, it was overweening pride that led to man's misfortunes, but nobody, I imagine, will accuse me of that. Still, one must not make too much of what was, after all, no more than a gentle spill. Had the trailer overturned in the steeper part of the track there might have been a nasty accident, but luckily it kept going until we were fairly down on the more level midden, when the towing-bar met some obstruction and I was catapulted on to a heap of—well, straw, and so on. Two churns, one of which at least seemed to be practically empty, had already fallen off, and I suppose it was the considerable clatter they made as they rolled away into a cart-shed that brought a rather heavily-built woman in slippers to the farmhouse door.

"What's the idea of this, then?" she asked.

I was anxious, as may be imagined, to give a full explanation of my unceremonious arrival, but whether it was the partial wetting I had had while running for shelter earlier on, or whether it was some effect of grain dust, akin to hay-fever, I was seized by a most uncharacteristic fit of sneezing, and



for some little time remained sitting where I had fallen unable to say a coherent word.

"Such a racket!" the woman said. "I'd have thought it was the Last Trump, if there'd been lightning with it."

"Atishoo!" I said.

"I don't know, I'm sure," she said, coming nearer. "Look at your trousers!"

"Atchoo—atchoo—a-tishoo!"

"Have you come far," the woman asked curiously, "just to give that carry-on?"

I continued to sneeze for some time, while the woman made no offer of help, contenting herself with a series of wondering exclamations and the absurd observation that it never rains but it pours. But at last the paroxysm began to abate and I was able to speak, though not at first freely.

"My name," I said, struggling to my feet, "is Woo—dear me—my name is *Atcher* . . ."

"Is that your umbrella and all?" the woman asked.

I think it was the state to which my faithful old broolly (a present from my colleagues, as a matter of fact, on my fiftieth birthday)—it was the sad condition of my old friend, when I recovered it from beneath the trailer, that made it clear to me that I must abandon any idea of calling upon Colonel Ripley for that day at least. I decided to cut my losses and

take myself off with the least possible delay. I had had about enough, to tell the truth.

"Perhaps you will be good enough to give a message to Colonel Ripley?" I began briskly. "As you can see—"

"How you ever come to be on that trailer," the woman said. "'Wagon Train' isn't in it."

"Never mind that now," I said. "Please tell your master that Mr. Wentworth was unable to keep his appointment to-day owing to a combination of—a—a—Confound it!"

"You'd better let it come," she said.

"—owing to circumstances over which I had no control. Just tell him that, please. And that I—that Mr. Woo—Woo—oh, devil take it, Woorasher! Say I shall be writing," I shouted angrily. "And good-day to you."

"I'll tell him you called," the woman cried after me, and burst into peal after peal of totally unnecessary laughter. There has been a sorry decline in manners, I fear, even in the countryside.

So there it is. I suppose I should write some sort of explanation to Colonel Ripley, asking for another appointment, but I don't seem to have the heart for it just now.

**Next week:
A Comfortable Billet**



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